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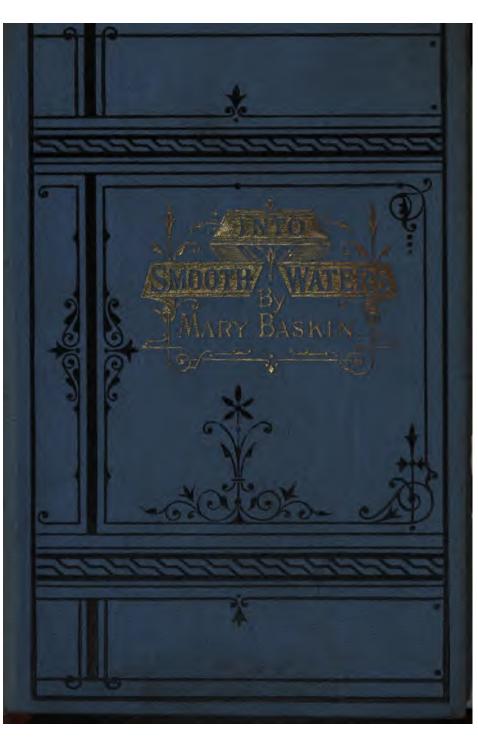
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INTO SMOOTH WATERS.

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# INTO SMOOTH WATERS

BY

# MARY BASKIN,

Author of "Only a Life," "Esther Douglas," &c., &c.



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# To My Father,

WHOSE LIFE WAS THE TEUEST MY OWN HAS EVER KNOWN,
AND WHOSE AFFECTION HAS BEEN THE BEIGHTEST LIGHT
ON MY PATH,

## I INSCRIBE THE PAGES

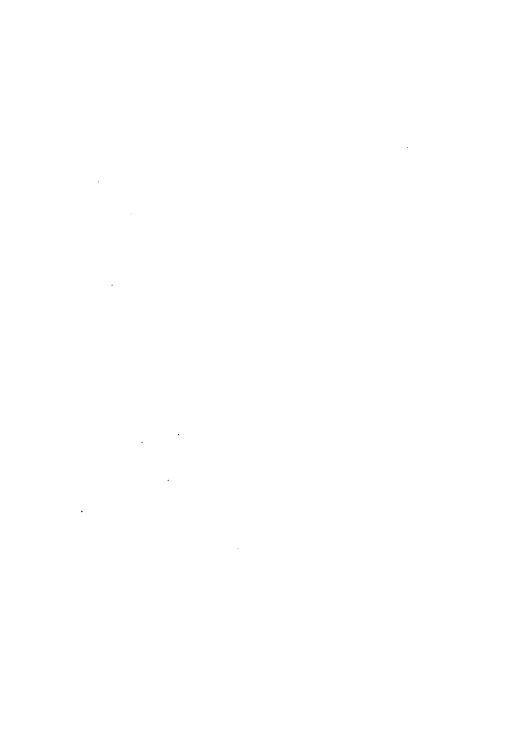
IN WHICH I HAVE EARNESTLY STRIVEN TO TEACH THE LIVING-POWER OF CHRISTIANITY

AS HE EXEMPLIFIED IT.

~~~~~~~

"HE BROUGHT THEM OUT OF DARKNESS AND THE SHADOW OF DEATH, AND BRAKE THEIR BANDS ASUNDER."

"HE ASKED LIFE OF THEE, AND THOU GAVEST IT HIM; EVEN
LENGTH OF DAYS FOR EVEE AND EVER."



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# INTO SMOOTH WATERS.

## CHAPTER I.

#### AN EXTRACT FROM MY DIARY.

"Visions of childhood, stay, oh, stay!
Ye were so sweet and wild!"

"Look, then, into thine heart and write;
Yes, into life's deep stream.
All forms of sorrow and delight,
All solemn voices of the night,
That can soothe thee or affright—
Be these henceforth thy theme."

Voices of the Night.

To me the voyage of life is at once unutterably strange, mournfully pathetic, yet wonderfully grand and majestic. It is like a masterly Oratorio, in which occur jubilant exultations, passionate, wailing, requiems, mingled with sweet minor chords and still sweeter chants; or like a vessel passing out of the harbour, through a sea of glass, into the fierce buffetings of the mad wind, and the turbulent tossings of the lashing waves, then riding into "the desired haven," under canopies of clearest blue, and through waters which "smooth at His smile."

The bark which has almost made the port can surely utter some words of comfort to the vessels still in deep waters, or warning to the ones that dance so joyously

upon the morning of life's sea.

A few months ago one of the girls in my class said to me, "Teacher, I wish you would write the history of your life." I started back, aghast, at the mere notion of revealing to any one the mysteries of human life in an individual case, especially when that case was

my own.

Since then the thought has haunted me. "Why not write it? Surely some heart will respond to its lights and shadows, its joys and its sorrows. The mystery of its pain, and the unfolding of its joys!" A still, small voice has whispered, "Write it. Show others the quicksands, point out to them the rocks, so that the smiling of the dawn of life may grow into the splendour of the full and glorious noontide, without being obscured by the dense clouds which darkened your meridian, leaving only rifts of light in place of its God-given effulgence."

At eighteen I was a dreamy, sentimental girl, full of vague longings for a true, noble, earnest life. I scented the battle afar off, and heard, in a visionary fashion, the murmurs of the distant warfare. With fallacies of false sight, and marvellous limitation of the knowledge of its hand-to-hand struggle, I stood a spectator upon the threshold of life. Confused with the din of its many-sided arguments, deluded by its fascinating sophisticators, lulled into false security by its poetry and romance, I took my place, unarmed, upon its broad arena, to learn by bitter experience the impotency of my own strength, the shallowness of my best intentions, and the deceitfulness of my own heart.

I was untrained for the conflict, and, alas! exulted

in my own weakness, calling it, falsely, strength.

"The world is before me," I cried, as my heart rose at the tableau of life which existed alone in my brain—a phenomenon of light and radiance, as glittering, alluring, and deceiving as is the ignis fatuus of the

desert. No misty clouds dimmed the transplendent

brightness of my own creation.

True, I had read of cannons' roar and bayonets' rattle, dying groans and wails of anguish, which ever and anon rang out from mothers' sons who were dying upon the gory greensward of earth's battle-field, while their fellow-soldiers were wildly dashing over their bodies to the fame and honour glowing in the distance; but to me their quiet graves, after the strife, were but "walhallas for the crowned." How should I know that even to the victors the guerdon loses all its blaze and colour through the tears which have dimmed the sight ere the goal is reached? Again, our own hearts always seem to cry out against the possibility of fearful strife or dire temptations crossing their path. These things may exist for others, we cry; but see, I am young, brave, and strong-hearted; they cannot come to me.

Thus stood I, looking out of the door of life, when I penned the first entry in my diary. Can it be sixteen years ago? Ah me! more than half of the life given to me has been spent in wandering after the husks and the apples of Sodom, which turned to ashes in the

mouth. Here is the entry:

"Eighteen years old to-day! How happy I am! I wonder if any girl was ever so happy before. Could I be happier, even if mamma were alive? I do not know. Sometimes I think I should like to tell her what a sweet, beautiful, thing my life has become. I am almost too happy; a mist comes over my eyes, as if my joy were almost intense enough for pain. I have had such a deal to make me happy to-day—heaps of letters and lots of presents. There were papa's! He gave me the watch and chain which my mother used to wear—my beautiful mamma, whom I only just remember. When he put the latter over my head I felt something very hot fall upon my face. Putting up my hand to wipe it off, I found it was like a tear, and somehow I feel sure papa dropped it there when he

put his present in its place. I wonder what made him cry. I do not remember that he ever did such a thing before. I am glad he did not, for it's very unmanly to cry, and shows great weakness; yet I do wonder what made him do it to-day. I do not intend to cry much during my life, for it isn't brave or noble; only weak people and children cry. If ever I read of very great heroes or heroines they do not weep, but they 'bite their lips to keep the tears from falling'—though I do not see how that can do it, or what the lips have to do with the tears—or, 'clench their hands in an agony of feeling, determined that no one shall know the grief which is eating out the heart.' Now, if papa had clenched his hands or bitten his lip, I should not have seen it, so it must be the braver way of bearing grief. Moey gave me a beautiful present—one I have long coveted—and for a few minutes I felt so sorry that I had called her mean and miserly when she would not buy a ticket for our fancy bazaar. I suppose she was saving up her pocket-money to buy me this pre-Just for a moment I wondered if I was not the mean and selfish one, for though I never forget Moey's birthday, yet I do not give her very nice presents, because my allowance is always spent before her birthday comes, and papa will not let us overdraw. She says she does not value the present for its monetary worth, and always smiles so sweetly when I give her my little offering, that I feel quite ashamed; yet, I cannot really be selfish, for when I do have my money I am always lavish with it, and papa says that is the reason why there is none left when I need it; but, you see, he does not know what lots of things girls require in the way of gloves, ribbons, flowers, and other minor matters of dress. Cousin Philip also sent me a present—a box of French gloves, and a wonderful assortment of bonbons. These did not come until late in the morning, so I went into papa's sanctum to show them to him. I found that he had been called out to

speak to one of the tenants, so I sat down in his chair to wait for him. He had been writing, as I thought, and I lifted the blotting paper to see if Philip was to be the recipient of the letter papa had been penning, thinking that I would add a postscript of thanks for the gift. I found no letter, but a very shabby copy of the first edition of Longfellow's poems, opened at the page containing 'Footsteps of Angels.' It had these two verses underlined:—

"" With a slow and noiseless footstep Comes that messenger divine, Takes the vacant chair beside me, Lays her gentle hand in mine.

"'And she sits and gazes at me
With those deep and tender eyes,
Like the stars, so still and saintlike,
Looking downwards from the skies.'

"Suddenly, with the swiftness of an inspiration, came the thought, 'Did papa think of her "deep and tender eyes" when he was giving me the trinkets which my mother used to wear? Did he miss her still? After all these years, was she unforgotten? Could it be of her dear eyes he was thinking, when, evening after evening, he would sit, his own shaded by his hand, while his grave face grew so quiet, and still, that we were wont to hush our noisy mirth at the sight of its quiet look? Did she in spirit lay her hand in his?"

"I sat musing, everything a blank but the fact that thus my father still kept her memory green and fresh by the very strength of his love. It was a depth of passion which I could not understand. Reverently I covered up the page, and turned to leave the room, as papa, at the same time, entered it.

"Looking in my face, he exclaimed, 'What! tears,

and on your birthday, too?'

"Actually I was crying, breaking all my resolutions

of bravery, while the hot tears surged up, and would not be restrained.

"' What is the matter, pet?' my father queried.

"Then, unable longer to evade an answer, I burst

out, 'Did you love her so much, papa?'

"He looked bewildered, as if vainly trying to understand me. Removing the blotting-paper from the book, I pointed to the verses underlined.

"He took the book gently from my hand, asking, 'Is this the cause of my Daisy's tears?' as he put

his fingers upon the marked lines.

"' 'Papa! papa! if I could but make up,' I murmured.

"He smiled as he kissed me over and over again, with many words of love and soothing. Then he drew me out into the sunshine, I having shed my first—remembered—tears over the mother whose grave we

kept so radiant with earth's fairest flowers.

"After he left me, I went into the greenhouse, and picked all the best blossoms it contained to lay upon her grave. Making a beautiful wreath, I took it down through the meadows to the churchyard, and placed it upon the mound, feeling as if when papa saw it he would, perhaps, love me even more than he had ever done before.

"I do not think I can be selfish, or else, instead of doing this, I should have stopped at home to play croquet instead of going in the hot sun to carry those

flowers to the churchyard. It was hot!

"Perhaps I ought to have played with Moey in the afternoon, and then we could have gone together to mamma's grave, in the cool of the evening, so that neither of us need have been lonely. I wonder how it is that I never seem to remember the better way until I have done my own, then, directly it is too late, I find out the other. Is this selfishness? A few days ago I read, 'Pleasing ourselves instead of studying the pleasures of others is the very quintessence of

selfishness; but the writer said she was 'now an old woman,' so she could not have known as much about the impulses of young people as I do. How funny it must be to be old and have a 'method' in doing everything! Now that I remember, there are a lot of people called 'Method-ists.' I suppose that is because they do everything by method; but I am not sure. I

will ask papa.

"The gardener made an awful fuss when he found out about the flowers; but papa took my part when I told him for what purpose I had taken them. Old John said if I had asked him he would have given me a better lot, without having spoilt all the trees by getting them; but if I had waited until he came back from the forcing-house, I might have forgotten them altogether. Then papa would not have known that I remembered the 'deep and tender eyes' he loved. Beside, John is a great deal too particular about the flowers, and it will teach him the lesson not to interfere with me.

"My birthday is to be kept next week instead of to-day, because Philip cannot get home until then. He says in his letter that if he had acted upon his impulses, he should have come back at any risk; but he thinks it is right to follow the dictates of his better judgment, and is therefore postponing his pleasure until he has attended to his duties. I am very glad that he has impulses too. Only I do so wish he had acted upon them, and come to-day; but the very fact that he has them will make him understand me better.

"Old friend, my diary, I must shut you up for tonight. Thinking of Philip has made me very happy; also, I am getting drowsy. It is past twelve o'clock, so my birthday has gone. Writing upon so many of your pages has made me almost too tired to say my prayers, because I have been telling you all the things I have thought and done to-day, and it has taken me nearly two hours to-night, in addition to what I told

you this morning, before Philip's present came."

This was almost the last entry I made in my diary, and I have given it you *verbatim* in order that you may judge what a silly, selfish girl I was, even while dreaming of a grand, heroic life in which I should

come off more than conqueror.

When next I opened its pages the real battle had commenced, and to me it proved no mimic warfare, but a strife in which I was so sore pressed that again and again the cry rang from my lips, "All thy billows have gone over me." The sea of glass was past, and I was at the mercy of the fury-lashed waters in a bark so frail that each fresh in-rolling wave made it shiver and shake until its utter shipwreck seemed a thing of certainty rather than improbability.

### CHAPTER II.

#### HOME AND ITS INHABITANTS.

I have not yet told you anything about our dear old home; even now there is not a room in it over which I could not shed tears. It was situated very near to a most beautiful grey old town; one full of historical memories, and revelling in legends at once powerful and beautiful. Yet, to me, the spot upon which all its loveliness centred was the grand old house of Elm Hollow, with its ivy-covered walls and imposing battlements. Now that it has passed into other hands, I often go—in the full sunshine and in the pale moonlight—to gaze at its magnificent proportions, and dream over its hoary associations.

You would not wonder at my enthusiastic love of it, if I could once paint the ever-varying beauty of the scenery surrounding it. The approach to the house was rich in the description of loveliness that money cannot buy. There were quiet lanes, banks of ferns, hedges tangled with honeysuckles and bryony, while to the left stretched a vast track of heather, dotted here and there with dwarf gorse, presenting to the eye an almost matchless combination of purple, crimson, and golden colouring, thus making it one ever-changing scene of beauty.

Towards the west we had a different dappling of hues and tints. There stood a perfect temple of beeches; the wood violet and anemone strewed the ground in the spring, and the red gladiolus crimsoned the beds of fern in the autumn. In the spring and summer the air was laden with the perfume of the hawthorn, while September and October's later season brought a glory of artistic illuminating perfectly indescribable; the landscape being literally aglow with the

alternating shades of colour.

Forming a transition scene, we had, in the background, the beautiful river of T——, widening at its near approach to the sea; its banks purple with sea asters or blue with the radiance of the sea lavender.

Oh, home of my childhood! was there ever a fairer place with which to compare thee? Every room is haunted with a memory! Every garden walk pregnant

with a fascination which I cannot withstand.

The occupants of that home? Ah, strange mystery of pain that sunderings of families must ever come! One part crossing the flood to hear the singing and the sound of many harps, to wear the incorruptible body, to weep no more, while the remaining portion wear the mortal until they grow weary—oh! so weary—of the fight.

A few weeks ago I stood looking at Sir Noel Paton's picture, "Mors Janua Vita" (Death the Gate of Life).

As the picture grew upon me I thought of one who

had conquered even as did that dying Christian.

My father! My pen lingers lovingly over the word, for whatever else God denied me, He gave the dearest, truest, father who ever lived. First and foremost he is in my affections now, even as he was before he said good-bye; for, thank God, death does not annihilate love—it only renders it more sacred and pure. He was the beacon-light of my life, whose memory is as an everlasting fragrance and an ever-increasing cause of gratitude. How can I be thankful enough for the gift given, when God let the light of my father's great love shine in upon every hour of my existence, until the Angel of Death opened for him the gates of life, and showed him the fields of starry asphodels. His great, brave, soul met the wants and weaknesses of mine, causing it to stand firm and erect when it would otherwise have utterly fallen.

If a soul should ever wander outside the gates of Paradise in search of men of unswerving faith, childlike simplicity, and broad—yet true—catholicity of spirit, I think the objects of such search would be found in men of like spirit with my father. content to master the A B C of Christianity before seeking to understand the mysteries of its plans of classifications or its abstract relations. He began with its first principles, then went on to know its perfections. Years after, when I had almost made shipwreck of the thing which is the very essence of a noble life, his pure, true, faith shone out as a star of hope, calling, with a voice of wooing, to the "Rock that is higher than I." It was not the verbal Christianity which he taught that afterwards so influenced my life; it was the truth he lived daily before his children and the world.

I am papa's eldest daughter—I had almost written was, but surely I am as much his child now as ever. How can I introduce myself to you? In the years

which have passed since I made that entry in my diary, I have discovered many things respecting myself, therefore I think I can now give you a clearer idea of what I then was than I could have done at that time. A girl strangely emotional, varying in my moods as do the lights and shades of a summer's day; wilful yet loving, selfish yet repenting; passionate in my loving as in my hatred; a great cause of anxiety to my father, and a perpetual troubler of my sister's naturally deep, quiet life. These were my characteristics.

In personal appearance I resembled my father; pale, with clear-cut features, and the thin, finely-chiselled lips of which we were as a family so proud; added to these I had the dark, passionate, gleaming eyes of

Southern inheritance.

Moey's face was like a dream of beauty. So fair, so exquisitely lovely, was she, that even I rhapsodised over her almost subtle beauty; it grew upon you like a wonderful strain of music, until it imbued you with a sense of your own materiality. Her eyes were very different to mine, they were pure and clear like "wells of truth," but her loveliness was of the face alone, for she was deformed.

When she moved you could not forget her lack of symmetry. This was the result of a fall in earliest childhood. The effects were not glaringly noticeable for several months, nor was the fact of the fall itself known until she had grown misshapen, when the knowledge came too late for the evil to be remedied.

I used to wonder what I should have done if I had been the sufferer instead of Moey! If, with my intensity of animal life, I had been made to carry this cross! Yet, I am afraid, I rarely remembered that it must needs be a bitterness to her also.

She possessed so sweet a disposition, that many years passed before I guessed how deeply this disfigurement pained her. Meek souls there are who make all their moaning inwardly, while outsiders see naught

but the smile of suffering conquered. She was one of these.

Aunt Isobel comes next; she was stern, but not unkind to us—the discipline of sorrow through which she had passed failed to mellow and therefore hardened her nature; unflinching in her exaction of everything which she deemed her due, she was equally just in her rendering to others the things she herself claimed; finally, she was one of those women who raise a strong barrier against anything sweeter or dearer than respect being given to them.

Now for Philip, Cousin Philip. Well, so well,

can I

"Recall the time
When we were children! how we played together,
How we grew up together! how we plighted
Our hearts unto each other even in childhood!"

He was Aunt Isobel's only son, but as utterly unlike her in disposition as two souls set in such close relationship could possibly be. Generous, open-hearted,

and free, he made every one of us love him.

When his father died, he and his mother came to Elm Hollow to live, and ere long his presence proved one unfailing source of fun and merriment. How I remember the day upon which Moey and I stood, hand in hand, awaiting the advent of the boy cousin and his mother; Moey trembling with excitement and timidity, I glorying in the thought that we were to have a new playmate, one who would not be too delicate to romp. He came, with his boyish, laughing, face and graceful ways, and won all our hearts into his possession.

I began to live! We played together, studied the same books, wandered through the woods, hand in hand, side by side; in fact, where one was, there the other could ever be found. Moey was his "Little Queenie," for whom he always found a mossy cushion before we commenced our reading or our sport, but

I was his "sweetheart," his "little wife that was to be!"

Oh, how happy we were! Then the first bitter parting came. He went to school, while I roamed about with red eyes, and puffed, swollen, cheeks, the very ideal of misery. Nothing but his boyish effusions, full of love reminiscences, and pictures of his present

as well as our past, comforted me.

The school-days flew by, rich in honours—for our Philip was no laggard at his studies. Again he returned to Elm Hollow, and the days of yore came back again, in spirit, with their old romance ever to be present to me; Philip still my lover, Moey his queen. He used to watch over her with a tenderness rarely developed in youth, anticipating her most trifling wish, until she christened him her knighterrant.

Our occupations changed. Instead of reading fairy lore, we dived into the quaintness and wit of facetious writers, or roamed over the flower-strewn paths of poetry and chivalry; then, tired of these, we would talk of the future, with its dream of doing, daring, and being. In addition to this, we also read all sorts of argumentative works, and engaged in discussions which brought into full play the polemical part of our natures. Oppressed by no sorrowful misgivings with regard to the future—knowing nothing of toil, pain, or heart-breaking, life stretched away into a glorious distance, one glad, bright vision of dazzling light and splendour.

Once more Philip left us, this time for college. We saw him often during his collegial life, but we did not count it the coming home until he had entirely finished with that phase of his drilling for a profession, and was

ready to enter upon his life-work.

"You must have a little breathing time, 'boy,'" my father said, "and then commence in earnest doing the thing you have chosen."

"Boy" was papa's rare pet name for Philip, and we all knew he was unusually pleased when he put it into familiar use.

"What is the 'boy' to be?" I asked, with a laugh.

"He wishes to give you that piece of information himself," papa answered. "So after we have finished our arrangements for his trip to Paris he shall come and tell you all the news."

"Let him tell us now, papa, and talk to you after,"

I entreated.

My importunities were laughingly put on one side with many good-natured innuendoes as to the unlimited

stock of curiosity kept by a girl.

Strangely enough, no definite words had ever been spoken about Philip's future. We had wondered about it, but had never been able to tease him into telling us what profession he really intended to

adopt.

From the window I watched papa take Philip's arm, and wander off in the direction of the moor; therefore, I rightly surmised that making arrangements for the Paris trip included a long talk about his future. With petulant impatience in my heart, I wondered when they would return. From this frame of mind I ultimately emerged into one of speculation with regard to Philip. Would he miss our home-talk, our caresses, our sweet, happy life? Would he yearn for our companionship, even while he was winning a fame worthy of being shared with me? Should I not yet sit at his feet, glorying in his world-known name?

Ay di mi! I did not know then the real meaning of the phrase, "making a name." I guessed not the tears, the rising early and sitting up late, the climbing, the toil, and anguish of spirit compassed in the words! How should I? I was but a little child in

aught but theories.

Never for a moment did I doubt his loyalty to me. It was true he had been more reticent in expressing his

feelings since he had returned from his collegial life, but was not that a most sure evidence of his love?

Oh, foolish dreamer! fond as foolish! to you no thought of an awakening came. Unlearned, in earth's lore, of love denied, ye knew nothing of the

bitter cup of which most women have to drink.

Well, ah well, indeed, is it if it is put to her lips before she has received the strength of the wine of her own love to pour out as an oblation in its stead—a love that dawns later in life obtains the offering from the hand that holds it, then pours out its own to the very lees, leaving no life, but an iron-grev existence, behind. Cover up such a woman's face with a mask, for the sight of its drifting aimlessness would make life too pitiful. Stay! there is a better way. Write God's peace upon it, then the drifting aimlessness will die out, and the world will hustle itself together to look upon its grave quietude, for the cry of its inhabitants is going up, "Give peace in our time, O Lord."

I knew nothing of this at that time. The bitterness

of knowledge does not come in earlier years!

Tell a child plucking daisies upon a quondam battle-field, that the roots of the white-starred flower were once gory with its father's blood, and it will laugh its pretty bewilderment into your face uncaring, because unknowing, the extent of its bereavement or the bitter pain the knowledge will bring in after years. I had read of women weeping, broken-hearted, over the wreck of their love, but it had only touched my heart with a misty sentimental pity, because, unused to suffering, I was alike a stranger to sympathy.

I dare to tell you, by my own experience, my own bitter tears, it is madness to talk of *knowing* another's pain, unless your heart has beaten pulsation to pulsation

in a sorrow of like description.

We grow in our pain even as in our joy; our capacities intensify. Thus it is that it becomes an impossibility

for a girl to understand the depth of a woman's pain; therefore, I thank God that the bitterness given me to drink came in my girlhood, not in my womanhood.

Even now my time of suffering was drawing nigh, yet I remained utterly unconscious that such was the case. While my heart was so light and gay, papa was listening to disclosures from Philip which would assuredly put a ruthless hand upon my dream of love and fame.

God puts a veil over the future, as a mother would

hide the world's bitterness from her little ones!

Somehow I had never once looked at the possibility of having to live out my life alone unaided; I meant to "do and dare," but as the wife of a grand heroic man, whose name should ever be upon the lips of the people. No wilder thought could have crossed my brain than the idea that I should have to live, suffer, and work alone.

Engaged in my visionary speculations, I saw the figures grow less and less in the distance, until they became as mere specks upon the horizon.

"I am glad he is handsome and brave," I cried, as

the joy of possession sang itself through my soul.

"Daisy, come and play a duet with me; it will make the time pass more quickly," broke, in Moey's voice, upon my reverie.

I assented; thus another hour passed, then visitors came, helping to while away the time with desultory chat; still papa and Philip remained out of doors.

"They are doing it to tease us," I at last exclaimed.

"I think not, Daisy; it would be unlike papa to do so; even if Philip wished to prolong your suspense, papa would take pity on you and bring him in."

"You have no interest in him, I suppose, that you can afford to wait so quietly," came the sharp answer from lips over which I had not yet learnt to 'set a watch.'

The afternoon wore on, then the letter-bag was

brought in, and the truants immediately followed it. Papa kissed us both, but even in the midst of the usual excitement, attendant upon the opening of the bag, I noticed that he looked flushed, as if he had either been worried or perplexed. Had Philip vexed him? A little later, while looking over my cousin's shoulder. teasing him about a letter he had received from some lady correspondent, I accidentally looked up and caught papa's eye. He was literally watching me with a look of pity in his eyes that for a moment alarmed me. Directly he saw I was observing him he averted his face, put on his spectacles, and began to turn over the remaining letters. Amongst them was one deeply bordered with black, which feature was not particularly noticeable on account of several others having been previously received from the same quarter. This he read with great interest.

"Another letter from Chrissie, papa? "asked Moey.

"Yes, my dear. Affairs are even worse than she thought. After everything is settled, all just debts paid, there will be barely enough money left to bring her to England."

"Why shouldn't she stop in India?" Surely some

of uncle's friends can find her a home!"

I need not tell you this hard speech did not come

from Moey. Philip answered it.

"The thing is utterly impracticable. From the tone of her former letters, they expect us to receive her, and I, for one, think her home ought to be here.

You agree with me, Uncle Robert?"

"Certainly. I don't see anything else likely to answer better, if the girls will only look at it in the same light. The poor little thing must not be brought over to be made uncomfortable, or to feel herself an interloper."

"Oh! papa, how could we object? I am so sorry for her. It seems so dreadful to have to leave her father out there and come back by herself, after their going out so happily together. Just fancy how fearful it would be if you were to die." And Moey went

straight into his arms to hide her tears.

But I was not to be softened, so I began, "Yes, of course, all that is bad enough; but if she stayed where she is, she would not be among strangers. I really do not see what we are to do with her, a third girl would spoil everything. Why not make her an allowance, papa, and let her remain in India?"

"Is that my daughter Daisy asking such a question? Child, you have yet to learn that it is the warmth of loving hearts which supplies the sorest need of aching ones, not a stinted, niggardly, fulfilling

of mere duty.

I knew papa was vexed, for he said "child" so sternly, that I was quite startled; but I was sulky, even too ill-tempered to ask Philip any questions that would elicit the knowledge concerning his plans which I craved. I nursed this feeling all the evening while I heard him giving directions, concerning his packing, and speak of starting early, in the morning to catch the channel boat.

Papa will tell me to-morrow, I told myself, while fostering this ungracious mood. Philip wished us "Good night" and "Good-bye" at the same time, bidding me take good care of Moey. This injunction caused me no surprise, for was he not her "knighterrant," and she his little queen? Then he drew me into his arms, and kissed me twice, once on my forehead, then again on my lips, my father meantime looking on.

That kiss took away the sting of the thought concerning Chrissie's probable introduction as an inmate of our dear old home, and most thoroughly subdued the crossness of my spirit; but I was too proud to sufficiently humble myself to ask for the so-much-desired information. So wrapt in my own thoughts was I, it was not until I reached our bedroom door

that I noticed Moey had not come upstairs with me. At the time I did not think anything of this circumstance, so I undressed, got into bed, and was almost asleep before she came into the room. Drowsily muttering something about the length of time she had been, I was almost too sleepy to notice her reply, "I have been talking to Philip!" Ominous words!

Thus for a few weeks longer was I spared the knowledge of the trouble in store for me. The dark cloud of my first sore trouble was quietly, but surely, gathering; the first notes of the battle-cry were coming nearer, and yet nearer, even while I was writing in my diary, "I am so happy."

### CHAPTER III.

### THE AWAKENING.

"Deep, unspeakable suffering may well be called a baptism, a regeneration, the initiation into a new state."

George Eliot.

I BELIEVE that a great anguish does most truly do the work of years, for, after passing through its baptism of fire, we are born into a fuller and deeper life.

No amount of theoretical knowledge can imbue us with this truer, purer, state of being. We must think, feel, and suffer for ourselves before we can attain unto it; but girlhood, when passing through this phase of life, cannot solace itself with the growth of so high a knowledge. It thinks only of the present anguish, and dreams not of the future victory.

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Oh, these bitter, bitter, sorrows of youth, when trials of faith and patience are all so inexpressibly new to us! Who can smile at them, even when after-years have nourished and brought up the fruits of perfect

peace and joy?

I, for one, can never laugh at the sorrows of young recruits who are putting in their first appearance on the battle-field, for too well do I remember the first sword-prick which I received. I believe the ruthless dispelling of a bright dream may cause the sharpest—not the deepest—pain of which it is possible for a young unfledged soul to conceive, because the most intense life of girlhood is certainly not its practical, but its visionary, part.

Just as the misty opening of a day may grow into a morn of wondrous brightness or a fierce array of storm clouds, so may the intangible, hazy, dreams of life's morning glow into radiant life or perceptible darkness. My morning darkened, but light often breaks at the

noon of life as well as at the meridian of day.

It was the evening of my birthday fête when the cloud first arose, gathering in density, until it swept

over the sky in almost impenetrable thickness.

"I shall be so happy to-day!" I had exclaimed to Moey in the early morning. She had answered, "I am sure you will; and Daisy, darling, you will listen patiently to Philip, will you not? I know his profession is not the one which you would have chosen for him, but I am satisfied."

She put her soft face against mine, with a gesture which I did not then comprehend. I can read it now. It was a woman's natural craving for sympathy—as dear to the human race in joy as in sorrow—in her happiness. Then I wondered if she were envying me my fresh, bright youth, unmarred by the drop of bitterness which had fallen into her own cup.

Listen patiently to Philip! as if I should do aught else. I might coquette with him a little, but I loved

him too truly to do aught but give him a patient hearing—in my heart I said a responsive one. For once in my life I was thinking more of love than anything else which the world contained, so I forgot to question her as to the implied knowledge she possessed with regard to Philip's future.

Blind? Ay, I was blind, or the words "I am satisfied" would have disclosed the true state of affairs

between them.

A few hours later Philip arrived, only just in time to aid in the reception of our guests. I had dressed with great care. My simple muslin had been artistically interwoven with most cunning trails of real ivy; my hair, of which I was so proud, was coiled round my head in simple Grecian fashion, and adorned with the same ornament. I had no vestige of colour about me, but the pure white of my dress and the dark-green leaves nestling about it, excepting a few dead gold ornaments—a locket containing Philip's likeness, taken when a boy, and which I had worn ever since; a necklet to match; and a golden arrow in my hair, which I had won at an archery match a few months previously—yet I looked in the mirror with conscious pride.

Do not misjudge me. It was not vanity this time, only the purer gladness that he would find me fair. It is as the portal of a new life to a woman when she knows that she will appear beautiful to her beloved. Although a weakness in her armour when she shows her knowledge of it, it is none the less a citadel of strength when she is aware that it is no fiction, but a fact, from which she derives such perception, while at the same time she hides it with becoming modesty.

I exulted in the beauty which the mirror reflected back. I had a presentiment that this day would, for me, bring in its train a great good. This made my eyes shyly happy, and gave an added sweetness to my mouth. I was glad, and my whole face evidenced it.

"You are simply lovely, sis," Moey said, as she gave the last finishing touch to my hair; then putting up her sweet, childish lips to be kissed, she added, "How good it must feel to be straight and beautiful!"

"You are more than all that," I impulsively answered; "you are good, leal, and true-so, you see, little one, you are far in advance of me." Yet I looked with a degree of complacency upon the forms reflected back—at the symmetrical proportions of my own figure, so wonderfully set off to advantage by the misshapen form of my sister—with the thought in my heart, "No wonder he loves me best." Then, for almost the first time, a woman's pity came into my soul towards Moey. I argued, surely she could never know wedded love and the blissful union of spirits as I should know it. In the years to come she would sit in her loneliness, while I should hold up my head erect, crowned with a woman's noblest good—a manly heart and a happy home. This was the picture that passed before my mental vision. Oh, how vastly different from the reality! Alas, the sorrow of it! Yet for all this, my first dear, dear, love, I could not choose but give thee the fresh adoration of my youthful heart.

With a kiss and a warm embrace we parted, Moey to make some further arrangements for the entertainment of our guests, I to go downstairs to speak to papa. We were sisters in more than name, for with all my wild wilfulness I dearly loved Moey, and she reciprocated my feelings to the full. Our caresses were not kept for strangers while hearts hungered for them at home.

As I crossed the hall I heard the sound of wheels, and waited to welcome Philip. He looked more manly than ever as we exchanged greetings, and my anticipations of the day's good were not darkened by any coldness in his manner. It was even more affectionate than usual, until I fancied that with the knowledge of

his future would come that of the time when I, too, should share it.

The fun was at its height. I had been petted and caressed to my heart's content by all but Philip; he had not once sought my company.

I watched him wander away with Moey; then, more than an hour afterwards, emerge from the tangled walks of the side woods, but he did not come near me.

There occurred a cessation from the games provided. The last croquet ball was pegged, while the aspirants to archery honours were lagging in their pursuit of them. Thus there was a short break before the tea was brought out on to the lawn. A large number took the opportunity of strolling off in pairs, to investigate the greenhouse and gardens. In an instant I had made up my mind to the appropriation of Philip for a short stroll. I had barely formed the resolution when he came to me. Putting his hand on my shoulder, he said, "Will you come for a walk after tea, Daisy? I want a talk with you."

"Yes; if I can get away from our friends," I answered. In my innermost soul I resolved that nothing should keep me.

"You are looking very nice this afternoon, dear."

"I am glad you think so," I answered. "It is a good thing that I have succeeded in pleasing your majesty for once."

"You always please me, Daisy, excepting when you

behave as you did about Chrissie."

My great love was humbling me indeed, for I re-

sponded, "I do not intend to be so wilful again."

"That's our own Daisy," he said. At this moment Moey came up, and I was left to find some one else to chatter with, for she wanted him to see about the re-adjustment of some garden-seats.

"You always please me." How the words sang themselves into the very brightness of the day, and kept up the repetition over and over again, like a many-voiced chant. It takes so little to make souls happy when they have the germ of a great joy in their souls; and these few words had made Elm Hollow seem to me the very elysium of all bliss. I would be good always; since God had given me this great gift, I would grow worthy of it. Perhaps this was the first noble thought my love had ever whispered to me, for the fact of the resolve to grow worthy proved that I was discovering my own shortcomings, and although this is a hard lesson to learn, it is yet one of the matchless ones in God's category of education; one of the rudiments upon which he builds the greatest and truest tuition.

I have made no reservation of this love of mine: it was not a thing of which to be ashamed. True love, no matter of what description, never is, neither had I given it hastily; it had grown with my growth, and, as I believed, in response to another's. It was one of the greatest loves of my life, but in after years, when I could make a distinction in them. I found it was not a thing over which I could make moan. When sentimental girls and women talk of blasted lives, and hearts wrecked by unrequited loves, I smile in my soul, for I know that never was life ruined by such a Hurt, pained, wounded, it may be. thing as this. but thank God! not wholly crushed, unless the victim herself wills that it shall be so. God does not take of that which is the essence of His Being, and lay it in our paths, as a rock upon which to shatter the very life which was the evidence of His love. He tries the vessel, but He never breaks it! I tell you—you girls who are talking of broken hearts and grey lives—No! no! hearts, and lives, both grow truer, braver, nearer to the light, by sorrows such as these, but they can never, never, suffer shipwreck unless they doubt their pilot, and will have none of His aid; then, and only then, will they of their own accord drift aimlessly, hopelessly, and wickedly with the current until they

strike the rocks which such lives must ever find in the waters, down which they so listlessly go. are vessels disabled by rocks that can be repaired and made even stronger and better than before, and it is even so with us mortals; God can refine and purify, by the very things which we call darkness and strife: or breakers and rocks!

The shadows were beginning to fall before I was released from my duties to take my walk with Philip. Most of the party had gone indoors to rest, preparatory to dinner, when we wandered off to have the talk for which I had prepared myself. It was deliciously cool; the young moon was gleaming through the trees, and the nightingales were beginning to trill their sweetest notes. Strangely enough—although 1 had read it but once, then with little attention-I thought of Mrs. Browning's "Bianca among the Nightingales," and half shuddered at the passionate

wildness of the poem.

The purple mountain of E——rose straight before us, its grand old heights hoary with the wear of countless ages, yet covered at its base with hundreds of wild flowers and patches of gorse. It photographed itself upon my memory as it had never done before. I also heard the quiet lapping of the waves upon the distant sea-shore, for the night was as still as if listening in hushed awe for the voice of God to give it resurrection. One could almost imagine that so brooded a soft, quiet universe created from chaos when He spake the words, "Let there be light." The clouds floated in the sweet serenity of their white raiment, unconscious of the storm winds held in abeyance by His hand. The nightingales ceased their trilling, and a great silence grew over all the land. A little star came peeping out to look upon the night's still beauty. and then withdrew, blushing, to hide itself in the fringed mantle of the coming darkness. Yet still we sat, mutely drinking in the beauty of the scene.

I could hear my heart beat; but animate things had no power to disturb the unbroken calm of nature's soft

pulsation.

The clouds that had covered the valleys came sailing up to the mountain top, and the "Paradise of purple" quivered into a deeper mood under the fast-shadowing skies. Then a soft twitter of bird answering bird in a last "good night," followed, while I felt a mist growing over my eyes, a "dampness of joy." Philip also helped to break the silence; not with words such as I expected, for I had fancied that his thoughts were entwined with mine even as my whole being was shaped with tenderest dreams of him.

He said, "It is at times like this that thoughts of God seem most nigh. I can almost imagine the happiness of Adam when God walked with him in Eden. Do you not remember He came in 'the cool of the day'?"

"Yes." I wondered if Eve felt much happier with

Adam than I did with Philip.

Again we both fell into a reverie while the shadows grew longer and darker; I was not impatient at his long delay in speaking, for love implied is, often, even sweeter than love spoken. A spell is about it before declaration has been made in words; and I was feeling its sweetest power.

"You know what I wish to chat with you about,

don't you, Daisy?"

"Your future; the profession you intend to adopt,

is it not?"

"Yes; that is one thing; you will be very much disappointed, dear, for I shall never be the hero of which we used to dream and talk." (Ah! he had not forgotten!) "No bard, statesman, or littérateur, to make the world ring with my name, but simply a follower in the footsteps of the fishermen of Galilee, who left all and followed Christ, preaching His Gospel."

"You are joking," I cried; then seeing his face, even in the darkening twilight, I read its purpose. I

knew this was no jest of his.

I changed my tone. "You can still win greatness; you might be an archbishop before you die; even bishops and prelates are pretty high dignitaries of the Church, and are thought a great deal of in the outer world."

"Not so fast, Daisy, my dear. I am not intending to enter the Episcopalian Church. I do not agree with her formulas, creeds, and observances, neither have I

any hankering after her emoluments."

"Do you mean that you dissent from the Church, and purpose preaching in conventicles and tabernacles?" I asked, aghast with horror at the bare thought of such a debasement of his noble powers.

"You cannot, cannot, mean it!"

"I do, Daisy. I must preach the Gospel, and I dare not do it under the shadow and protection of an ecclesiastical rule in which I have no faith. You are wrong in calling it the Church to an Englishman unless she is the object of his choice. A man's Church is the one he loves, not the one that he is forced to support under compulsion. She is not the Church of my affections, therefore I dare to go outside of her pale. I am consumed with a burning desire to tell men and women the power of Christ to save, but I cannot take upon me the obligations of any body or sect, unless I am prepared to subscribe to, and carry out, all her teachings; this it is impossible for me to do in connection with what you call the Church."

Oh, my dreams of fame! My visions of greatness, how quickly ye fled! A Dissenting minister's wife! Did such people ever live, really live, at all? Did they ever visit? or did they all grow worn and faded, like the little woman in grey who laid claim to that title of honour, residing in our town, and who seemed

to be left out of all socialisms and visitings?

How much I had yet to learn! The worst blow was to come.

Philip went on: "I have thought of this for many months; my mind is now fully made up. I see no other course open to me, if I would not live a dishonourable, cowardly, life, one which would ever be a lie, as all lives are, if lived in open rebellion to our best instincts and convictions."

Had I underrated my power? Could I not move him from the sternness of his resolve? At least, I would try; putting both my hands round his arm I pleaded: "Philip, if I entreat you to give this idea up, will you do it for my sake? I don't think I could bear it if you so lowered yourself."

Was there an inflection of surprise in his voice, as he made reply? "I cannot. If it were necessary to relinquish my greatest earthly good, in order to do this thing, I still would not dare to turn my face against a

known duty."

Never had he looked more firm than when he made this avowal. I was persuaded nothing would move him from his determination. He proceeded: "You see it cannot materially affect your position; whatever relationship I may bear to you, it will not alter the fact that you are Margaret W. da Costa, of Elm Hollow."

I had almost answered, "A wife always sinks with her husband." Fortunately, I forbore.

"Again, I am not likely to injure your social reputation, because we shall not settle here, and Moey is

already reconciled to it," he continued.

This was taking matters into his own hands with a vengeance. He had settled the matter, and even told Moey without asking me.

A sharp pang of anger shot across the dream of my love, as I questioned, "You have asked her, then?"

"Yes, Daisy," and here he put his arm round me in most brotherly fashion, with a touch almost too light

to be a caress. "I think I had better tell you the other secret now. As soon as she is a little older I am going to rob you of your sister, my little Queenie—I am going to marry Moey."

## CHAPTER IV.

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### . EAVESDROPPING.

"There is something sustaining in the very agitation that accompanies the first shock of trouble, just as an acute pain is often a stimulus, and produces an excitement which is transient strength."

GEORGE ELIOT (IN "THE MILL ON THE FLOSS").

I MADE no moan, I did not cry or shriek, for it is not when the iron enters deepest that we give forth our strongest cries of suffering; at such seasons, instead of articulate plaints, we toll the requiem in our own souls. and make no outward sign of the inward wailing. Therefore, I sat there, in unquiet, yet certain, possession of my visible self, while a battle undiscernible to mortal eye was raging in my soul. The nightingales again began to sing. Now, alas! it was exactly in the same mournful strain as that in which they sang to Bianca -a dirge of madness and pain. The waves still lapped the shore, but they murmured, now, of desolation instead of hope. Even while I told myself that he must never know how foolish I had been, I felt the chill hand of an icy sorrow binding me to a strange future before undreamt of, and almost too appalling in its character for me to bear alone!

"My life is spoiled," I inwardly repeated to myself, as the scales fell from my eyes, showing to their clearer

sight the manner in which he had outgrown his boyish passion, and this without tainting his character with the slightest tinge of dishonour. Here was the revelation of the secret of my father's pitying glance. With sorrow's intuitive knowledge, I now felt certain that he knew the true state of my feelings, or regard, for Philip.

All these thoughts floated hazily past me in far less time than it has taken to write them, ending with the

reiteration of the moan, "My life is spoiled?"

Was it spoiled? Is it in the hands of any man or woman to spoil another's life by retaining a love where its gift would make earth almost perfect? Thank God, never! It may for a time throw a shadow over it, but shades perfect the brightness of a life even

as they do the splendour of a summer's day.

We talk of "dead hopes" mournfully and with a pathetic sob in our voices, while we forget that we have the angels of these—our dead trusts—who are often better than the hopes themselves, transfigured children of our earlier faiths or loves; no ghosts gibbering at us with ghastly pertinacity, but white-robed visitors comforting and sustaining our souls when the foe presses hardest. But why do I say we forget? for this knowledge does not come to us until we have travelled a weary way upon life's road. Surely God keeps it as a radiance with which to illumine the greyer shades that fall at eventide, when we can smile with "truer hearts and braver" at the voices of our youthful fancies, because of the growth of grander realities which are fitting us for a land where there is a perpetual springtide of hopes without the continual falling of the leaves and the wintry desolation following.

I could almost shed tears over this girlish trial of mine, it was so bitter then. Yet I can almost smile when I think how I magnified its proportions until the

weight of it seemed greater than I could bear.

I pity myself as I should pity any girl who, putting

- her foot out upon the threshold of womanhood, meets at its very door her first sore disappointment. Because the most pitiful knowledge which can dawn upon a woman's soul is that in which she first discovers how boundless are the depths of her yearning, craving, heart, and how inadequate is everything which the world contains to supply its wants; when no satisfaction can ever come to it unless some unchanging, unwavering, finger steadily points her to the fulness, tenderness, and glory of the Supreme Love. I had no such indicator to prove my beacon to that higher goal, therefore I wandered farther into the darkness, hungry and repining, and filled with a great disquietude of heart.

After Philip's disclosure, he went on, "You are not vexed at the fraternal relationship I shall bear towards you, are you, Daisy? Say you are glad, dear; I shall

ever cherish you as a beloved sister."

I could not say I was glad; it would have been so utterly false. I could hardly bite back my pain; yet for answer, in the fast-gathering darkness, I lifted my face to his and kissed him, coolly and calmly, as if my heart knew no dreadful, surging, pain, saying, "In token of your brotherhood, Philip; Moey is worth loving."

"God bless her, she is!" he responded, fervently. "So is my new sister," he added, as he stooped to

meet my lips.

"You are very cold," he exclaimed, as he touched them; "you are like a stone, so icy. Let us make haste indoors; I am afraid the dews are gathering, also. We have stayed away from our guests too long, but a 'Daisy' is always a privileged person at her own birthday fête."

Thus he ran on, as happy and gay-hearted as a boy, until we came to the little brook running between the garden and the woods. There, with the words, "I am going to lift you over for the sake of Auld Lang

Syne," I was put down upon the other side, every

nerve quivering with repressed feeling.

I could feel every muscle of my face in play, until I almost feared I should lose all control over my voice. but fortunately I did not do so. Where do women get the requisite strength with which to cover up their wounds from the scrutinising eyes of those who love them? Is it bestowed in pity, to lessen their pain? I imagine so, for I can realise no more dreadful thing than would be the unveiling of her heart to a girl who suffers as I was suffering, especially in the first burst of her pain. "Grief's earnest makes life's play," wrote one, with a woman's heart throbbing its warm pulsation against that of a suffering humanity, and she spake the truth. In this instance I proved for myself how women can jest almost over their own graves, if thereby they can hide from the world the pain their thoughts cause them.

We reached the house a few minutes later; inside all was light and gaiety, but even while the mirth jarred in the very gates of my soul, I was apparently the most careless and happiest of the party. I even sang—at the request of one of our party—the old songs which Philip and I used to sing together, keeping up my strange hypocrisy, until I began to marvel at my own power; then to wonder if any one else of our company carried a load of care and laughed over it as. True, my mirth was empty, and I was con-I did! tinually asking myself if my heart would for evermore sit in darkness; yet none could guess the gloom. hid it with many a joke and much laughter, until in my inmost soul I could echo the words of the Preacher. "I said of laughter, It is mad! and of mirth, What Behold, this also is vanity." Truly, in more senses than one, he that increaseth knowledge increaseth sorrow. Very hardly did I take my first lesson, or rather the fruits of it, yet my behaviour completely deceived papa, as I very shortly discovered.

When the last of our guests had taken their departure I congratulated Moey, as I kissed her in token of my love, and then teased papa about his forthcoming loss of a daughter's affection, until I was literally amazed at my own power of blinding him as to the true state of affairs; finally, I fetched his slippers and dressing-gown, wished him good-night, and

went upstairs to my bedroom.

For the first time in my life I wished—oh, how ardently!—that it was not shared by Moey. I could then have battled with my sorrows alone; under the present circumstances, I was still compelled to wear the mask. For a few moments I sat down—in a perfect chaos of mortified pain and bewilderment—to consider my position. I must live in the same house with Philip—at least for a few months—hear his voice, see his face, and witness his devotion to Moey, knowing, now, that it was the evidence of his love for her! Accept myself his former attentions, realising that they were only brotherly, and that our lives, in the future, must be spent far apart.

Soon I heard Moey's footsteps on the stairs, and almost before I had time to resume my old manner she was in my arms, hers clinging round me as they used to cling in childish days, and we were mingling our tears. Thank God, she did not know the cause of mine. I thank Him even more, because no harshness crept into my words or feelings towards her. When we are reaping the harvest of memories, it is good to feel that no black stain of anger shadowed

our dealings with our loved.

How happy she was that night! Her face grew even more beautiful than before as she spoke of Philip's love. Even while I write, I see her dear, shining eyes radiant with unspeakable tenderness and love as she praised him.

"He is so true and leal," she said. "You can never, never know, Maggie, what Philip's love is to

me. I have not, until the last few months, dreamt that so great a good could come into my life. I used to fancy how desolate I should grow when you married; but now—oh, Maggie, darling, I am so happy! I feel like Mrs. Browning when she sang:—

"" My own, my own,
Who camest to me when the world was gone,
And I, who looked for only God, found thee!
I find thee; I am safe, and strong, and glad.
As one who stands in dewless asphodel
Looks backward on the tedious time he had
In the upper life, so I with bosom swell,
Make witness here, between the good and bad,
That love as strong as death, retrieves as well.'

I tried to be contented with my sunless life, then God

sent me this beautiful glory into it."

With an effort I answered, "You deserve it, dearie; but I could not have guessed you cared so much about this sort of thing. I am having no end

to my surprises to-day."

You should have seen the sweet flushing of colour over her usually calm face, to understand my sister's feelings when she replied, "No; because I have hidden it as far as possible; but, Maggie, do you think any woman could live perfectly content without some great love to fill the soul? When I read of women who have sacrificed home, position, and friends for the men of their choice, who were morally lovely and noble, I used to feel my heart thrill with their spirit, until I have felt it almost impossible to take up the burden God had imposed upon me; for how could I, think that any man would ever love your poor little sister?"

I could not speak, my emotion was mastering me, for if Moey, so good, so calm, so pure, dared not face a loveless life, how could I?

Moey, my little sister Moey! no green sods, or moss-covered tombstones, can ever efface the remembrance of your love-lit face that night! It was

almost more than I could bear. If I could kiss you once again, my pet—feel your cool, soft hand upon my forehead—I think I should rest more content to-night. In the land that is very far off they hear your voice, while I sit upon my own hearth, and hear it nevermore, listening ever for its faintest echo, even while I know the futility of my longing for it. I am striving -oh, how hard !-to still the pulsation of my heart, as the memories of youth come flooding in. seems so long ago, so far away in the dim past; stretching back into the long ago of old dreams and doings. Do you know what it is to see age stealing on you day by day, to watch the grey hairs thickening, see the eye dimming, to lay your withered cheek against the freshness and fairness of a younger one? and as you have done it, did you ever hear an intonation of heaven's music calling, while the angel voices whispered, "Nearer eternal youth"?

All this I know, yet to-night I am as a very child in the hands of these thickly-flocking reminiscences of my girlhood. I see the dear old casement at which we stood—for Moey had opened the shutters to let in the light of the moon—the sweet tea-roses clambering over it, shedding their perfume into every breath of air, the stately trees in the distance; but, above all, I hear Moey's voice as she talks of her plans and projects for the future. We spoke of Philip as girls always talk of the man who is to marry one of them, and after the first rush of emotion, when Moey quoted Mrs. Browning, I joined in the conversation as if every word did not contain a sword-prick. Ah me! how easy it is for us to wound each other, even while we have no conception of the pain we are inflicting.

We had been standing at the window some time when Moey said, "We shall not be married for two or three years."

"Why?" I queried.

<sup>&</sup>quot;Because Philip will have to go through a course of

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theological training at another college, and we do not intend to marry until he has settled in some church. You see, the fact that he has matriculated at his own college will exempt him from everything but a very superficial examination as to his secular attainments; yet he will have to be recommended to a college, study there, then pass through the necessary forms of induction into his church under the surveillance of an able committee appointed as adjudicators; they will test his orthodoxy to see if he is sound concerning 'The faith once delivered to the saints.' Then he will occasionally go out from the college to preach, until the deacons and members of some church give him a call. When once he is settled in a church your sis will go to him, dearie; but, you see, it will be ever so long first. We shall still have two or three more years like the past."

My heart said "Never!" But with my lips I merely remarked, "It will be a long engagement,

Moey; supposing Philip should change?"

"Change, Maggie! You do not know him, or you would not even dream of such a thing! To speak of change in connection with Philip is as bad as it would be to speak of it in relation to me. I love him with a great, strong, love of which I can never be ashamed! Do you think he rates me lower than I him? We shall never say of each other, 'I loved once.'

"" God is too near above the grave beneath,
And all our moments breathe
Too quick in mysteries of life and death
For such a word. The eternities avenge
Affections light of range.
There come no change to justify that change,
Whatever comes—loved once."

Philip and I love with a deathless love, and I fear no dropping asunder of our affection. I never dared hope for such a priceless thing, but now I hold it as my own, my very own!"

If I tried for ever I could not describe to you the glad exultation of her voice. She was quoting Mrs. Browning's love thoughts. I was thinking of the book we had read together—nay, not of the book, but a simple couplet in it, which rang itself up and down in my heart like a knell,—

"Yet the Sphinx of Life stands pallid, With her saddest secret told."

Poor foolish girl! I thought, because I was denied Philip's love, that I knew the whole of the bitterness of spirit in which the words had been penned; but God does not give us the hardest lessons to learn at first. When preparing us for the work of the future, He first gives us the alphabet of human sympathy to learn, and its only teacher is personal suffering and

personal conquest.

"It will be a long engagement," Moey went on; but that does not matter. It is no trial to wait for a man whom you love; it would be far harder to live without a knowledge of his affection. Philip told me that—just at first—he made up his mind not to ask me to be his wife until he had made a home for me; then he banished all his scruples, and made me happy by breaking his first resolve. I shall see him very often, because I know he will miss no opportunity of coming down to us."

This fresh girlish love of my sister's was a revelation to me. My heart seemed to grow older as I listened, for I knew that even her love was not a love like mine, yet she had won him. I should have crowned him my "king of kings," glorying in him as the martyrs gloried in the truth, but I could not so freely have spoken of my love. It is ever thus. We women who love most are compassed about with a false shame, so that we cannot utter half our passionate yearnings; yet we have our predilections and aversions in far greater intensity than have women of sweeter, fairer, natures.

Moey closed the shutters, lit the lamp, and then we proceeded in our task of preparing for bed. As I took off my chain from my neck, I found my locket was missing from it. It contained my mother's likeness and hair, and was also a gift from my father; therefore, I was considerably disturbed over my loss.

Moey proposed that we should go into the drawing-room, and see if it had been detached from its pendant while we were sitting there. I assented to her proposition; but finally, as she had partly removed her dress, I went alone—to find that my day's discoveries were not yet at an end. The most bitter one was yet to come to me from Philip's lips.

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## CHAPTER V.

## BITTER REVELATIONS.

"One by one thy griefs shall meet thee;
Do not fear an armed band;
One will fade as others reach thee—
Shadows passing through the land."

A. A. PROCTOR.

My diary contains only the chronicles of four days of my existence; the first I have given you *verbatim*, the second is as extravagant in its sorrows as was the first in its joy. I am glad I have preserved these records, for it is difficult now to realise the keenness of that first youthful sorrow.

As life grows in its great throbbing earnestness and its intense reality, we throw away the notion that it is incumbent upon us to keep a memorial of our weaknesses, frailties, and follies-of our struggles, our entreaties, yearnings, and pitiful beatings against the inexorable duties and griefs which God puts in our pathway. We also prove the powerlessness of words to give a living, graphic, account of our inward life, until the attempt to lay our soul upon paper baffles us, and we keep the testament written only upon our hearts. As I turn over the leaves of my diary, I thank God that its unwritten sheets are free from every vestige of memoranda of my more bitter anguish. could not bear to look upon them if this were not so: if it bore marks of the travail of my soul in its bitterness, when the grapes of Eshcol failed; or the flagging, fainting, days which followed, with their hours of soul weariness, and the subsequent torpor of my whole If I were compelled to read records of the stages of my journey when I found no fountains of Elim, after the roughness of the way, it would harrow my soul to its very depths. God is very good; He prepares us for the heavier trials by teaching us to bear the lighter ones; and then, when their shadows are closing around us, He irradiates their darkness with His luminous love, until every distinct feature of our sorrow becomes a mellowing, softening, light in the great picture of our lives.

"I shall never be happy again," I wrote, as the tears fell thick and fast; "I should like to die and go to my mother!" feeling in my first sorrow an instinctive outcrying of my whole nature for some ear that would listen as if the story were her own; for a voice which would lull my grief with its sweet tenderness. Ah me! how I have longed for a mother since then! With what inextinguishable covetousness have I watched other girls who had one! How I used to cry out that I was "orphaned of the earthly love and heavenly," forgetting that a mother may forget her child, while God promises ever to keep His

loved ones in the hollow of His hand.

The day after Philip's disclosure I wrote in my note-book the account of our stroll, and then finished up the entry with the following:—"When undressing I discovered that I had lost my locket from its chain, and went in search of it, fearing that it might be trodden upon if left until the morning. Going into the drawing-room, I heard voices in the lesser one, which was shut off from the larger by their vertiare doors, through which everything uttered could be heard as plainly as if no barrier existed.

"I had just discovered my locket, when I heard my name mentioned, lightly and easily, as if its import were a thing of little consequence. I listened—I made no excuse for my conduct—and was rewarded according to the accredited guerdon of eavesdroppers.

"Philip was speaking: She took it very well; Daisy has more heart than I gave her credit for having; she was very sisterly and enthusiastic in her

praises of Moey.'

"'Poor little Daisy! She has plenty of heart, but her waywardness spoils her, my father answered. 'Sometimes I am afraid the child has too much to make her path an easy one. Tell me exactly what she said about your engagement.'

"'She said Moey was worthy of love, and then she

gave me a most sisterly kiss.'

"There was a pause in the conversation, and I was about to escape to my room, when I heard my father say, in a meditative way, as if he had been pondering Philip's words, 'You have relieved my mind very much. I do not care about telling you now, for the child would never have offered to kiss you if my suspicions were well founded. I was afraid that you had taught Daisy to love you.'

"Daisy, love!" and I heard his careless laugh. Believe me, uncle, she does not yet know the meaning of the word "love," excepting in its dictionary definition, or in relation to the members of her own family:

her heart is asleep, or almost so, at present, and if ever it gets the better of her head, or her ambition, every one will know it, for, at present, she is possessed with one idea—she dreams of no higher goal than fame

and greatness.'

"'You misjudge her, my boy. When her mother was her age, she was just such another girl, as impulsive and as wilful; but God and I only knew the great depths of her woman's soul. Affectionately demonstrative girls are by no means the largest-hearted. Daisy always tries to hide her better self, as if she were ashamed of it; but when she attains a truer growth, she will cast off these feelings, as trees cast off their dead leaves. Youth is always more or less ambitious of unworthy things, because it has not learnt the relative value of them to higher, nobler life. I used to think you loved her—I mean as a boy.'

"'So I did, but it was because she was more a playfellow to me than Moey could be—she was rather my chum than my lover; but, of course, I did not then know the distinctive difference between the two feelings. The first time I came from college for my holidays I made up my mind to win Moey; she is so gentle and loveable, without so many angles to her character

as Daisy possesses.'

"' Daisy would have been a wife better fitted for you

if you had loved her; Moey is so delicate.'

Daisy; she would never be the wife I want. She is perplexing and intricate in her character—so much so, that if there were no other woman in all the world, I would not marry her. I want an auxiliary in my work, not an opponent, and Daisy would cramp and fetter me with her over-eagerness for worldly fame, until the conscientious fulfilment of my duties would be a physical and moral impossibility. She is so complicated in her ways—ignorant, yet wise; passionate and wilful to the extreme, yet wonderfully forgiving if

offended; one moment like a fierce storm of wind, the next joyous and happy as a little child. Moey is pure, gentle, true, and even in her disposition—such a wife as a minister needs. No! Daisy would never make a suitable wife for me."

As I re-write this conversation, I wonder what strange fatality caused Philip to so utterly change his views in the years that followed! How it came about that the love he so undervalued, afterwards fell into a passionless sleep, while his grew into a mighty force of frenzied emotion, almost unconquerable in its strength. Do women ever take back into their hearts the objects of the love which they have once fought against with every fibre of their being, until, pale and weary, they obtain the conquest over their feelings, and sit down desolate over their victory? I think not! Women or girls, who wage this warfare, once rending its object from their innermost souls, keep watch and ward too well to let it ever find a resting-place again in the heart in which the old passion has been usurped. I am glad it is so; even though at one part of my life I should have rejoiced had it been otherwise.

I crept back to my room with a great pride stirring at my heart; a feeling that overmastered even my intense suffering, while I argued to myself concerning Philip's statement: 'If there were no other woman in all the world, I would not marry her.' I had not waited for my father's answer—why should I? since Philip had so misjudged me; for, even now, I know that my capacities for love were far from meagre, and I scarcely overrated them as a girl.

I opened the locket, looked long at my dead mother's face, kissed it, then turned to the other side, and took out Philip's picture. Coolly and deliberately I held it over the wax light on the dressing-table, and watched it burn through, then fall in ashes upon the whiteness of the cloth. Moey was already half-asleep, so she took no notice of the action.

"Thus shall my love perish," I inwardly vowed, with the tragic passion of youth, forgetting that the material is easy of destruction, while the spiritual dies not, but passes from one phase to another. I never ceased to love Philip, but my passion changed to a tender, sisterly, affection, as far removed from the old love as are the Elysian fields from the realms of Pluto.

That night I dreamt of my mother, and awoke to find that even in my sleep I had shed many tears, so that my excuses to Moey for my weary looks were so good that she troubled me with no questions such as

I should have found it difficult to answer.

I roused myself at breakfast time, and heard, with some show of interest, that Chrissie was coming to us at once, and entered into a discussion about her instalment in our dear old home, while trying to overcome my reluctance to seeing her in it. 'I know I shall hate her,' I told myself, 'for I want Moey all to myself until she marries, and then, when only papa and I are left, it will be too horrid to have an interloper.'"

The next event in my life was Chrissie's advent at Elm Hollow. In those days I was prodigal of my tears, and I had shed many secret ones during the intervening months of that summer evening and the day when she came. Chrissie, who proved my purer,

better self, my mentor, my friend!

When I saw her first the earth was mute and white, wrapped in its fairest, most spotless mantle; and from that time I turned over a new leaf in the volume of life. Oh, how clearly I see it now, though I was so blind to the fact then! At first I saw her darkly, through a veil of prejudices and prepossessions, yet, ere long, I learnt the beauty of her character. She came into my unquiet life like the first dawning of a new spirituality. A strange foreshadowing of better, even if more sorrowful, days. She helped me to work my life into harmony, to piece its colours and shadows into a pattern of which I had never before conceived,

even after the life of ONE who gave Himself, as such, to the people. It was she who brought healing, through another, to my first wound; comforted me with her tireless love and sympathy, and blessed me with humanity's sweetest fellowship. What can I say more of her? She is still where I can clasp her hand in token of my love, yet I shall not flatter her by any encomiums of praise I can utter. She knows my However, months—ay, almost years—passed before I broke down the barrier my causeless dislike built up between us, until, almost imperceptibly, it began to diminish, leaving a growing respect and love in its place. I was bewildered with the mysteries of life: she had bowed reverently to the Hand that held them, and drank of their sweetness, while I drained their bitterness.

She was not in the least pretty; her face was too brown for beauty, yet to me she became the embodiment of all earthly graces; her eyes had an inner light so beautiful that you never once thought of their colour. "Soft eyes," I learnt to call her when my love had grown. She was never brilliant, but always sympathetic, and this I hold to be of far higher value than mere attractiveness; she never impressed you with her superiority, yet her very purity of spirit made those who came in contact with her grow more noble and womanly. In all the after sunshine and grey of my life, hers was the love that added joy to the one, and pointed to the light through the other.

Yet I must make confession of the treatment she received from my hands when first she came. I see her now! a pale yet dark girl of wonderfully graceful carriage, eyes fast filling with tears, an outstretched hand, and a tremulous voice, saying, "I am come."

"You are welcome, my dear." And my father had taken her into his arms as he did his own children; then putting her back so as to get a good view of her, he said, "You are like him." We knew he referred to

the brother he had loved so well; I was jealous of my father's attention to her, so I considered it a piece of consummate acting when she put up her face to his, saying, simply as a little child might have said it, "Thank you; I am so glad you think so; my poor darling father!"

My greeting was cool; I did not even kiss her; but Moey made up for all deficiencies on my part by a greeting warm enough to kindle all the activity of the green-eyed monster. Involuntarily I thought her graceful, but chided myself for making the admission

even while the thought was in my mind.

Seated round the fire in the evening, she told us of her father's death, how he had died in her arms; then, with a silence more eloquent than words, she sat shading her eyes from our view, while she gathered her forces together sufficiently to give her power to say, "I cannot tell you any more to-night; I dare not think about my darling's death."

My heart was touched, yet my evil genius whispered "acting," and I steeled myself against one who needed all the love I could give her. I did not know then her history of self-abnegation and heroism as I

know it now.

Papa changed the subject of conversation by saying, "You are looking like a shadow, my dear; the girls must teach you to forget." He said this heartily, as if no doubt of our readiness crossed his mind; Moey looked up at him with that instinctive confidence which was her chief characteristic, and then slid her hand into Chrissie's with a quiet pressure of love. I held aloof, declaring to my alter ego the impossibility of taking me in with any of that hypocrisy. Little did I dream how heart-heavy she was with poignant pain, or my soul would have overflowed with pity instead of steeling itself against her sorrows. I was still such an untaught soul. I did not seek to inspect or analyse my feelings, being content to exercise my

weaknesses and littlenesses instead of trying to gain strength from the only true source. I also showed my arrogant spirit upon every occasion, trying to teach her that she was a dependent upon my father's bounty.

One morning, when she had been with us about a month, I was sitting at the piano singing the soprano part of "The heavens are telling," when she came into the room, and standing behind me, she took up the alto. I think I have never heard it sung as she sang it—with a mighty swell of musical inspiration impossible to describe. She seemed in a state of superhuman exaltation as she proceeded, while the words rolled out like a grand old anthem, then fell to the sweetness of an evening blessing. I caught up the feeling like a quickening fire, while the electric current of feeling flowed freely between us. "Never unperceived, ever understood," rang out the stately old chorus as we both reached upwards to a more holy influence. "Displays the firmament" died away into a mere echo, and then I raised my eyes to her face, not fully and lovingly, but furtively. It was so beautiful that I could not move them for a moment, then as she drew her breath hard I said with a half cynical laugh, "We are not in heaven yet!"

She looked at me fully, answering, "No, but I was just thinking how perfect my father's bliss must be; it seems so hard to comprehend that for him there is the full tide of song, the perfect rapture, the satisfied longing while we sing our hearts full of a great, glad, joy only to come back with surer sadness to the life

we must live."

"Is life hard?" I queried; "at least, I mean is it

hard for you?"

In a moment, as if all power of control had left her, she leaned her head upon the piano, and with a burst of tears and a dreadful moan, sobbed, "Oh, papa, papa, my own darling, I do so want you."

Impulse said comfort her, but even while my lips

were quivering with suppressed feeling, my tempter said, "Take no notice of her, people are better unobserved when they are hysterical."

I gave ear to the advice of my evil genius, turned away from her, and commenced sorting my music as though she were not in the room. With a violent effort she restrained her sobs, and then left me alone.

I stifled all the admonitions of my better mentor; to find out later how much nobler Chrissie was than I under like circumstances. When next I opened the piano my own heart was bereaved, even as was poor Chrissie's; but I had no haven of rest into which I might pilot my storm-tossed heart, no comforter to assuage my tears. I leant upon the human, she confided in the Divine. God eased her pain, while I drifted into deeper and yet deeper waters of anguish.

# CHAPTER VI.

### MORE OF CHRISSIE.

"Break, break, break,
On thy cold, gray stones, O Sea!
And I would that my tongue could utter
The thoughts that arise in me.

"Break, break, break,
At the foot of thy crags, O Sea!
But the tender grace of a day that is dead,
Will never come back to me."

TENNYSON.

Bur the same poet gives us an exposition of God's doings when, with large-hearted introspection, he

sings on, into our souls, the fuller, happier, music of a future day, as he utters the grand truth,

"That out of distance might ensue
Desire of nearness doubly sweet,
And unto meeting when we meet,
Delight a hundred fold accrue!"

If there existed no sinless land in the eternity of the future, where, in newness of life our love should have its object again to embrace, who could take up the hard, toilsome, lessons which our Creator imposes? Who could write a story such as mine? I thought that God had done His worst when He had taken from me the desire of my eyes in the shape of Philip's love: I had said I could never be happy any more with this dark-browed Nemesis of unrequited love ever dogging my footsteps and casting its grim shadow over all the hours and days of my life. But, alas! I knew not -oh, I knew not-of another trial hanging, hairsuspended, over my head—one full of the bitterness and anguish of death itself. While whining over "buried love," and all the rest of the sentimental stock-in-trade phrases kept by a young girl, an array of fiercer storm-clouds were gathering to let their strength fall upon my poor defenceless head.

Meantime my behaviour to Chrissie was impertinent and insufferable to the last degree. I affected to despise her until the poor child used to actually weep with angry, passionate, vexation, while I would tranquilly smile at the discomfiture she evinced as heartless in my conduct towards her as it was possible for one girl to be to another living under the same roof.

Philip's lost love seemed to have robbed me of all the good of which my nature previously partook, until I delighted in causing her the exquisite torture which a person can cause another without making her own conduct a matter for the personal remarks and animadversions of the other members of the family.

A glorious frost set in, and there followed a capital

opportunity for lovers of skating; but, fond as I was of the sport, and accomplished in many masterly figures and gyrations, I never once skated with Chrissie, excepting in that maddening, mechanical, fashion so utterly offensive to all graceful women. I did this more especially because I knew she was too shy and retiring to skate alone, and therefore necessarily my awkward movements would affect hers.

She made no sign that she was aware of my determination to annoy her, thus causing my conduct to be still more resentful of her presence in our house. At last, one morning her keen sense of the humorous entirely upset her gravity, and, with a demure dropping of her long eyelashes, she burst into so hearty a fit of laughter that I could hardly control my astonish-

 $\mathbf{ment.}$ 

"You do look so ridiculous," she ejaculated between her outbursts of merriment. "I really cannot help laughing! If I were you, Maggie, I would come

out and practise when no one is here."

This was too much! "Practise when no one is here" added the last straw to my bitterness of spirit towards her; so, without replying to the suggestion, I started off on one of those elegant evolutions so difficult even to practised skaters. My movements were unlaboured and easy, because from our earliest childhood we had been taught the graceful exercise; but I was not prepared for the effect it had upon Chrissie. Her face was like that of a girl who had received an insult without retaliation, but, with the deepest and most painful feeling, unstrapping her skates, and, buckling them together, she simply said, "I am going home."

I did not accompany her, but all the while I was trying new figures and ways I could see a pale, reproachful, face, while a still, small voice whispered "Shame!" on my conduct.

After this, there was a cessation of active hostilities.

I changed my tactics, and waged the warfare against her with a cold and deadly politeness. From the earliest hours of the morning until late at night I relentlessly carried it on until I made her life a misery and a burden to her.

If she asked me to sing with her, I had always some favourite author who claimed my attention, or else a cold prevented the use of my voice.

In after days how I repented and mourned over these exhibitions of all the weakness and unworthiness

of my character!

And what was my inner life? Was it the glorious thing which once had filled my dreams? Was it part of the arena upon which men held up kingly-crowned heads and women gloried in their laudation? Ah, no! The radiancy and beauty had fled with the lost love, while I turned away from the voice which would have guided me to a holier, even if more subdued, light.

A fortnight later I sat before the mirror, dressing for my first ball. Moey was weaving my many tresses into the braids I always wore, and twisting them into the coils of shapeliness that were at once so neat and The wax candles gave out their soft light over the luxuriously-furnished chamber which Moey and I shared, with its dainty lace hangings and exquisite point trimmings, its mirrors, and its toilette-table strewn with the contents of our joint jewel-case; while the firelight danced and glowed upon the marble busts of many eminent men, who looked down complacently from their brackets upon the very modern times in which they were compelled to take a part; upon the thickly-carpeted floor, with its oak-polished sides, the panelled walls with their open-frames and casemented windows, and, above all, upon Moey's sweet face, as she admired her own handiwork.

"I wish you had a few pearls for your hair, Maggie," she said, as she took a final look; "they would show

up your hair to perfection."

At Chrissie's suggestion, she went to get some azaleas for it; and, as my cousin accompanied her, I was for a few minutes left alone. Then, standing upright before the mirror, I took a survey of myself before going into my first whirl of pleasure. I was astonished at my own loveliness; it takes so little to make youth look beautiful. I can surely say so now, when no tongue can sneer at my vanity; for I have watched my grey hairs growing one by one until they have flecked my spring's crown with the first falling of age's snow! Yet, even while I was glad to see myself so fair, I mourned that there would be no eyes of my loved to look at me. Philip had found another more fair! My face grew set and weary. What would it matter how brilliant or beautiful I looked when my beauty could not dazzle the eyes of the only man I loved? I pressed my fingers over my eves to shut out the visions which came to me, and then laughed aloud in very recklessness of heart at the glamour my imagination had thrown over a cousin's affection. It was so much easier to laugh than to cry, and wild mirth leaves no red eves to tell the tale as does weeping! The old life had been so beautiful; the new one was so narrow, so finite, in its grasp!

Some subtle magnetism brought back again that old indescribable yearning after my mother, and even on the eve of my first ball I hid my face in my hands, crying, "Mother! oh, my mother!" only to recoil again to my old feeling of desolation. If my heart had yearned for God's love as it did for hers, surely He would have answered with His own comfort; but my first bitter outcry to God was not one of entreaty for His love; it was only the first faltering step to knowledge as I made the piteous moan on bended knees, crying from a stricken heart, "O Lord,

There was naught of love in the assertion, only a vague, incomprehensive feeling after God as of one

Thou knowest."

possessing more infinite pity than earthly friends, while ever and anon a verse that haunted me by night and day would come like a shield 'twixt me and utter despair. It was this:—

"Thou knowest not alone as God all knowing,
As man our mortal weakness Thou hast proved;
On earth with purest sympathies o'erflowing,
O Saviour! Thou hast wept and Thou hast loved,
And love and sorrow still to Thee may come,
And find a hiding-place, a rest, a home!"

But it was long ere I trusted His knowledge and

crept into His arms of love.

I am wandering away from the night in question. It may seem strange that my father—a Christian should permit one of his children to go to so worldly a place of amusement as a ball. However, I was not a professing member of the Church myself, and the rules and regulations of the Episcopalian branch of Christ's fold are not so strictly enforced as to prohibit dancing, In addition to this, the divertissement was given by one of our most intimate friends, and nearly all her guests were personally known to us. Therefore, papa did not interfere with Aunt Isobel's acceptance of the invitation. Chrissie was still in the months when the world demands outward, as well as inward, mourning, and Moey was so conscious of her deformity that she shrank from publicity of every sort-indeed, she was afflicted with an almost overpowering and inveterate shyness of all company excepting that of her most dearly-loved friends. So aunt and I were going alone.

When they came back with the flowers, Moey commenced twisting them artistically in my hair, mixing their wax-like blossoms with its glossiness, until it literally blackened with the contrast. Then she put them in lovely clusters, among the mysteries of white tulle, which swept in soft fleecy billows over the pale pink of my dress, transforming it into a fitter garment

for Ariel, than for a mere mortal. Just at the last moment one of the shoulder arrangements gave way; after various ineffectual efforts to put it right, Chrissie fetched from her own room a most beautiful star, formed of the rarest of soft-gleaming pearls, and, with a great accession of colour in her usually pale face, proffered it to me as a secure fastener for the rebellious knot. I was longing to wear it, and thus add to the beauty of my dress, but my wicked pride overcame my longing, and I declined the loan with most uncalled-for hauteur in every inflection of my voice.

Moey interposed, with a beseeching look at me,

"Do wear it, Maggie; it will perfect your toilet."

"Thank you, I prefer it as it is; the knot seems secure enough now," I said, as I put in another small pin, for I was going so quickly from one sin to another that I scarcely heeded how the falsehood slipped out. Moey turned away with a pained look upon her face, while poor Chrissie falteringly said, with that tortured look about the lips which speaks so plainly of an aching heart, "Why do you hate me so, Maggie? You will not let me love or do the slightest thing for you. I would not have offered any one else the loan of my darling mother's brooch."

Little did I know her own self-denial, when she asked me to wear it! When our loved are wearing the roses and lilies, of their Father's providing, in the many mansions, we do not like to see another put on the ornaments of our better angels, who now dwell so far away from us. They are too sacred, hallowed by so many of our tears, our passionate caresses, and wistful longings for the forms they once adorned and the now folded hands that touched them! If I had guessed any portion of this after-knowledge, surely

my actions would have been vastly different.

When ready I went down to my father's study or sanctum, to show him my dress; he was lying back in his easy chair, with his hand carelessly thrown

over the arm of it: so delicate it looked with its long thin fingers that even I noticed it, for the Da Costas rarely showed illness but in the wonderful transparency of their hands and the listless languor of their steps, because of the inherited—but not sickly paleness of their complexions. He had a volume of the writings of a scholarly divine upon his readingstand, but he was giving it no attention, seemingly being in a brown study. I shall never forget my darling's face as I saw it that night; there was a rapt expression upon it, a kind of supernatural beauty impossible to describe! A world of sweetness welling up through his dear, beautiful, eyes that has often since reminded me of the beauty which God's children shall put on at the latter day. Oh, my beautiful darling, if only I had known that never thus should I see you again! So we tremble upon the very brink of our sorest sorrows with no foreshadowing to warn us of the coming anguish!

"Little butterfly," he said fondly, as he kissed me with the sweet, grave, lips, which answered to mine for the last time. "What is this," touching my dress, "but the pomps and vanities of the wicked world from which your godfathers and godmothers promised to

deliver you?"

I laughed gaily, forgetting for a moment my sorrow, exclaiming, "You see, they have not kept their promises."

"No," he answered, musing thoughtfully; "they have not. It is not in the power of any to keep such vows for another."

"Papa!" I exclaimed, in startled astonishment, "are you serious? Do you wish me not to go to Mrs. Maurice's?"

Selfish, wayward, pleasure-seeking as I was, I believe if my father had said, "I do not wish you to go," I should have remained at home, regardless of the loss of the evening's gaieties. But he did not.

If he only had, part of the sting of his death would

have been taken away.

Looking at me, with the great tenderness that always overflowed his heart when speaking to his children, he answered, "I should like to see my Daisy clothed with the robe of righteousness, and wearing the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, rather than all this finery."

These were the last words my darling ever spoke to me, for at that moment the carriage came round to the hall-door, and with a long, lingering kiss upon his dear forehead, I whispered, "This shall be the last

time, papa."

As we drove away, a mist came over my eyes while I thought of his wonderful love and gentleness to us. Leaning back in the close brougham with much outward quietness and composure, I was yet full of a great internal excitement—a perpetual warring 'twixt my better self and its opponent. Down in the very depths of my heart I questioned if this was the life I ought to live. A still, small voice made itself audible above the din of the conflict, asking, "Dare you?" while human nature, in its assumption of wilful bravado, answered, "Yes; I am strong, self-reliant, proud. I can face the whole world, and never show a heart-ache; I am, at least, brave enough for this." The tiny voice rippled up to the surface again, murmuring of "Broken cisterns;" of a life unsatisfied, as the pleasures of the world would pall upon me; of heart and strength failing through the weariness and bitterness of my spirit; reiterating my father's favourite motto, "Lose self in holier things; seek help from God."

That morning I had received a letter from our late rector's daughter. He had left the town in consequence of the opposition shown to his ritualistic tendencies. When I perused the account of her work in her father's new church I smiled at its intense earnest-

ness. She wrote, "To mamma's great horror I have commenced early rising. Now I give the children their music from seven until ten minutes to eight every morning, as we cannot afford to keep a governess. At eight we all go to matins; then breakfast and school fill up till twelve o'clock, after which the little ones have dinner, and I always sit with them during the hour. As soon as it is over we go out for a walk; then I teach the village children for an hour and a-half. At five we go to evensong; then our dinner, after which I cut out and make things for the

mothers' meetings.

"On Friday evening I take the choir and practise for the week. This is no easy task, as you will understand when I tell you that although I lead the singing, we have an excessively harsh alto, a direfully shrill tenor, with a number of other voices better summed up as nondescript than in any other way. also have to practise myself, and the organ is not too good a one to play by reason of the stiffness of its notes. On Christmas-day, I was so tired that I could hardly play the concluding voluntary at evensong. I had four services—celebration at eight, fully choral, matins, children's service, and evensong; this, with the decorations of the day before quite finished me up, yet I am growing happy, because I feel so useful." Reading this letter in the morning I smiled, in a superior contempt, at the account of Mary Bradley's drudgery, even while I envied the earnestness which called forth my half scornful smile. As I was going to the ball, I kept asking myself if such a life did not, in reality, prove more satisfying in its results than mine?

I argued to myself concerning her numerous duties, wondering if she had outlived the burden of her grief. Her sorrow had been a keener one than mine, yet she was putting it entirely on one side to live for others. While I repudiated the ritualistic forms of her father's

church I could not but own to myself the trueness of Mary's faith in God. She had buried a love deep as mine—not away from her own heart, but from the sight of the world—stood by a grave when she expected to stand at the altar; heard the words "ashes to ashes" over one of the noblest, truest, hearts that ever beat with love for a woman, yet she shirked no duty, sought no excitement in which to forget her anguish, but meekly took up the cross and carried it. I grew bitter, haughty, unloving, and fitful in my temper, because something I had never really known as my own had been refused to complete my life. Wildly I had moaned to myself, crying out that everything was gone, even while I knew nothing of the mad, mad, longing for

"The touch of a vanished hand, And the sound of a voice that is still."

Ah! but, thanks be to God, only "still" until the resurrection morn, "Vanished" simply till the day breaketh, and the long night shadows flee away! Only

till then, or how could we bear it?

No dear lips to kiss, no hand to grasp! only the great, drear loneliness that closes round us when God calls our loved ones to the waters of life and the mystic palm trees! When we have experienced all this, when our most precious treasures are shut up in the, to us, mysterious darkness of the great eternity, then we may speak, with hushed voices, of death and bereavement, naming our dead as if we were keeping holy sacrament; but never, oh never, do we know the grimness of the King of Terrors until then!

Yet his black shadow was creeping on into my life, even while I danced away the hours in the enchanted

moments of my first ball!

## CHAPTER VII.

#### DEATH AND DESPAIR.

"Death has not slain them; they are freed, not slain;
It is the gate of life and not of death
That they have entered; and the grave in vain
Has tried to stifle the immortal breath.

"They are not tasting death, but taking rest,
On the same holy couch where Jesus lay,
Soon to awake, all glorified and blest,
When day has broke, and shadows fled away."
BONAR.

WHEN I entered the ball-room all my uncertain longings for a more real life faded. I ceased to think of any nobler existence, for I stood upon enchanted ground, listening with heightened pulses to the strains of fascinating music, my feet so answering to their joyousness that ere an hour had passed I was alike forgetful of my sorrow and my nobler thoughts. many reasons I shall never forget that night. programme of the dances was soon filled up with names of future partners, while I grew literally intoxicated with the flattering encomiums I received. On every side was displayed luxuriousness, taste, and search after pleasure. The swelling of the music, the soft, perfumed, air, the brilliant flowers and subdued lights, all added to the bewildering enjoyment of the mazy dances, until, when the morning looked in upon us, I had confided to my latest partner that I was only "just beginning to live," and, forgetting my father's parting words, added, "I could live like this for ever."

I am in an agony as I write of that morning! I went straight from the scene of gaiety and triumph into one of direst lamentation and most bitter mourning. The remembrance of it is fearful to me. If I

could but shut my eyes to it! Yet surely he is "For ever with the Lord," even while it takes length of time to teach us mortals how to finish the whole and say, "Amen, so let it be." I could not utter the "Amen." My father, my darling, how could I? I wanted your dear love on earth, I craved for your smile here; not put away out of sight, hidden in the bosom of the mother earth. I wanted your chivalrous, unbought, love to leaven my selfish egotism and idle indulgence, not the bitter, bitter, knowledge that your unviolated, unsullied, life was making heaven brighter, while my lower world was bereft of its sweetness and purity.

I never knew the great, yet stern, beauty of my father's ideal of living until it was too late to let him know how I appreciated its almost matchless nobility of purpose. Do we ever reckon up the virtues of "our own" until for us there is naught but their quiet graves, while for them there is the Divine completeness with which God shuts in the lives of those who walk with him and are not, because He has taken them where He wraps them in the music of the angels' singing, through which no dropping of human tears can penetrate? True, oh, most true!

it is-

"We catch up wild at parting saints, And feel Thy heaven too distant."

We beat with frantic gesture upon the door through which they go; the great, cold, unspeakable, stillness, which is dumb to all our entreaties, our wildest, most

piteous beseechings!

Oh! these tender, holy, memories, which creep into every life, settling with a vague, brooding power over the horizon of our personal world, how we hover round them, afraid to touch their sacredness with our pen, because we dare not open the floodgates of our soul, knowing that "The old wound is hardest to be healed."

Tears fall thick and fast as I try to write this part of the record of my life; yet, thank God! they are not wholly sorrowful ones. They are tears out of which He has taken the sting, although the Sphinx of life has told her "saddest secret" into my ears. Never, till now, could I have borne to rake up and show you the sorrow of this my first bereavement; but I am learning the fulness of that rest which is unutterable, when God gives tired hearts peace after the battle, and quiet from the warfare of their own passionate anguish.

I came home in the stillness of that grey winter morning to meet a sorrow so great that "the weary wheels of life" almost stood still before the magnitude

of it.

All the fashionable world of our little town had been at the Maurice's, and I had heard many sparkling bon-mots and much plaisanterie of a thoroughly honest kind—not that sort which hurts another. I was repeating one of the jokes to Aunt Isobel, when I noticed a pale glimmer of light coming from under my father's study door. I broke off in the middle of my story, exclaiming, "Papa has not gone to bed yet!"

How can I tell it to you? In a moment I had

How can I tell it to you? In a moment I had opened the door of the room, and saw my father with his arms lying across the table, his face bowed down upon them, and his whole attitude that of a man drooping from fatigue. "He is asleep," I said, touch-

ing him softly, saying, "Papa, papa!"

He made no answer, no movement; but just lay there, still and quiet as if in heavy slumber. I crossed to the other side of him to see if he were really sleeping or only pretending, and I saw what I can never express!

A piercing shriek rang through the house, and then superhuman strength seemed to come to me as I lifted his dear head, and commenced—quietly and calmly, as if made of stone—taking off his necktie and collar.

Some intuitive foresight told me that he was dying, as I watched the crimson blood oozing from the pale, white lips; yet I could not feel. In a dazed, mechanical way I rang the bell—violently, peal after peal—for the servants, then pillowing the pained, anguished, face upon my bosom, I gave my orders.

"Thomas, go for Dr. Artery; do not delay a

moment. James, you go for Dr. Bertram."

Their bewildered faces, as they answered to my summons in hastily-thrown-on attire, their concerned looks when they saw the cause of it, all moved round me like figures in a dream, nothing more. Aunt Isobel stood helpless, and the moments wore away until other servants came, and carried him up into his bedroom. Then I heard a movement in Moey's room, and this roused me, for turning fiercely to my aunt, I exclaimed, "For God's sake go to Moey, and break it gently to her."

Almost in less time than it has taken me to write this, Moey was by my side, Chrissie with her; the former weeping as passionately as it was possible for one of her quiet nature to do; the other with a set face watching my father, in an agony of grief, yet tearless. She moved towards him, but I put out my hand to keep her back, saying, in low, stifled tones, "Go

away, do go away."

After what seemed an eternity of time, Dr. Artery came, and before he spoke I knew that my fearful

forebodings were to be realised.

"Your father is dangerously ill," he said, turning to us. I answered him—forgetful of my ball-dress, and the strange incongruity of it with the scene I was witnessing—as if I had no part or lot in the matter of my father's death, for the numbed, dead, feeling was creeping over me again, "He is dying." I did not put it as a question, but an assertion, and he answered it as such, for he merely remarked, "Had you not better send for your cousin?"

"Philip? Yes; please send for him at once. Will he have time to reach here?" I questioned.

"I am afraid not," taking out his watch. "You will not be able to send the telegram for another hour,

and by that time I fear it will be too late."

Then Dr. Bertram came in, and confirmed Dr. Artery's opinion, and added, "He has not another hour to live;" putting his hand upon my shoulder as tenderly and affectionately as it was possible for an old friend of the family to do, he said, "Try and bear it patiently, my child. He will be better off."

Oh, poor words of comfort to an aching heart, when we want them close by us to touch and to love, only to know that they are better off, while we are worse, so much worse off. If this were all, if there were no meeting-place, how unbearable life would become.

Then he began questioning about the time papa was taken ill, but nobody could tell him. Moey had had her good-night kiss and her evening chat with him as usual; he had taken his supper, and then gone into his study, and no one had seen him after excepting James, when he went to bar and bolt the shutters.

This was all we knew until we found him suffering in the morning; the doctors both said the hemorrhage must have commenced some hours before, and that life was fast ebbing away, while all human aid was powerless to prevent the drifting of the soul out into the ocean of the vast eternity which lies beyond death's barrier.

Oh, the fallacy of human power! Even the whole wealth of our love could not call forth one glimmer of recognition from the dearest, truest, eyes in all the world—all our wildest entreaties move the dying lips to speak to us, and God only knows what it means when we first realise this.

The moments ticked away into minutes as if they were bearing no treasure of ours out upon their great tide; then a solemn silence filled the room. I think I

have never since listened to such a cold, unearthly,

stillness. Every breath of his leaving one less!

"Kiss me, darling," I entreated, as the eyes unclosed, looking with a pitiful, dumb, pain into vacancy, but no response came. A long, quivering sigh; then over all his dear, dear, face the grey shadow crept up, and for the first time I lost all self-control. "Only speak one word, lovie. Oh, papa, papa!" I besought. The doctors interfered, begging me not to disturb his dying moments; and again, for his sake, I held in check the anguish which had nearly overpowered me. Moey was

weeping bitterly, but it was in Chrissie's arms.

"It is over!" Dr. Bertram said. "My poor children, you must come away now." Even as he said it, filled with a wild, despairing grief, I threw myself by my darling's side, crying, "Oh, papa, papa! I did love you so; come back, oh, come back!" And the silence brooded throughout the room as if it partook of the quietude of the dead. Over the face a beautiful light dawned, while the lips smiled as if they had caught a radiance from the parting soul. I was carried from the room; and when next I looked upon him, his dear hands were folded calm above the passionless breast, as if waiting for God's "other work." For him, there was

"No more the tossing and the whirlwind, never The anguish out at sea."

But I could not say,

"Sleep on, beloved; we who could not aid thee Can fold thy prayerful hands. God for His everlasting glory made thee: He knows and understands."

Instead, I laid my pale cheek against his clay-cold one; put my warm lips to his stiff, death-frozen, ones; called to him as a child calling for its mother—and blank stillness alone made response! Fiercely the tempest of pain raged round me, and I was beset with its merciless beatings—driven hither and thither without a

God or a friend upon whom I could call; for I repudiated the idea of taking my grief to the former because He had robbed me of my father.

"'Whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth," quoted our rector, in the orthodox monotone usual upon such

occasions.

"How He must love me!" I resentfully retorted,

thinking of the two losses I had sustained.

"He will not always chide, my dear. God is very pitiful, if you will only come to Him," he continued, taking no notice of the effects of my heart-burning and irritation.

"He is not pitiful to me," I cried; "He is hard and cruel." Thus my heart would chafe and fume against the texts with which he plied me. If he had only grasped my hand and dropped a tear, it would have eased, instead of aggravating, my pain; while the platitudes of consolation that he offered only exasperated me. I was almost mad! The inexorable, relentless, stoniness of death awed and appalled, even while it lashed me into a fury of ungoverned hate towards the Hand that had laid so great a burden of desolation upon me. "Tell all that to Moey," I exclaimed, as I pushed back my hair from my hot forehead; "but don't tell it to me. She believes it."

Philip came almost crushed with the suddenness of the blow. I was the first to see him. He arrived earlier than we expected, and I was moaning out my heart by my father's side when he entered the room.

"What shall I do?" I cried, as I saw him. For answer he drew me into his arms and stood looking

down into our darling's peaceful face.

I could feel the strong control he was exercising over himself, but when with yearning heart I called papa's dear name the tension gave way and he knelt by the bedside sobbing out a man's great sorrow. This was exactly the thing I needed to make me forget myself!

In a moment I was comforting him until he rose

from his knees—a strange tremor running through his frame—and said, "I must go to Moey, where is she?" "I do not know," I answered, truthfully, for my sorrow had made me selfish, and after the first few hours, I had nursed my grief by myself. Chrissie I had also repulsed with a perverseness as discourteous as it was wicked. Aunt Isobel came to me and put her arms round me entreating me to take some rest. but I put her affection away in like manner. the first and last time she ever voluntarily caressed me. yet I was reckless of all love, but that over which the grave would soon close. Looking back I am inclined to believe that all this brusquerie of mine was simply and solely caused through the intense repugnance I had conceived against all outward sympathy, because I felt that my sorrow was one too great for words.

If I had only gone to the Prince of Peace for compassion He would have taken His erring child into the arms of His love, and, commiserating her deplorable state, would have poured into her heart the balm of Gilead; but, alas, alas! I hated God for placing the darkness of the tomb 'twixt me and my father; I was oblivious of His benefits, withholding all acknowledgment of them even while He was slowly, but surely, calling me to a higher experience of His forbearing love. Love, the golden mean, was dropping its light across my path, even while I cried out against the way which led to the brightness. I did not know then that, for a time, all "chastening is grievous," but afterwards yieldeth the peaceable fruits of righteousness.

I remember making the wreath for my father's coffin, weaving the white-starred flowers with fronds of beautiful ferns of every variety; I also have a recollection of going into the darkened room to lay it upon the pall before the coffined clay was borne to its last resting-place.

Then followed a blank, wearisome, feeling, as if there were nothing else to do, no one else to love, after which I roamed over the house, into his study, his bedroom, and every place which he had frequented, making complaint in my heart against the Hand which had bereaved me. How long this continued I do not know, but, at last, exhausted nature took her revenge, and I launched out into a strange, hazy life, full of pleasant, and also bitter memories, with intervals of acute, yet almost unconscious pain. A sense of drifting languor encompassed me, and my life was in other hands than mine. While my father's body was lying out in the cold, white, moonlight, his child was fighting the battle 'twixt life and death, powerless to keep back the former's fleeting sands, yet unprepared for the misery which would inevitably have followed the latter.

I was alone! In all the wide, wide, world, no parent's heart upon which I could lay the burden of my griefs, while in the philosophy of my creed I could not echo the poet's song—

"I hold it true, whate'er befall, I feel it when I sorrow most, 'Tis better to have loved and lost Than never to have loved at all."

And as little did I think that a day would dawn when I should cry with believing heart—

"Peace! come away; the song of woe
Is after all an earthly song.
Peace! come away; we do him wrong
To weep so wildly; let us go."

Ay, "Let us go," but let it be up into the mountains of God from whence we can behold the "Valley of the shadow of death," as the entrance to heaven's high rapture, the goal of all God's dear saints, who "Came out of great tribulation and have washed their robes and made them white in the Blood of the Lamb." Even while I pen this I hear the echo of the God-

inspired words, "Write, blessed are the dead who die in the Lord," while, with holy reverence and loving humility, I append to them my hearty Amen, for "Their works do follow them."

## CHAPTER VIII.

#### A GREAT CHANGE.

"'Tis pitiful the things by which we are rich or poor—a matter of coins, coats, and carpets, a little more or less, stone or wood, or paint, the fashion of a cloak or hat; like the luck of naked Indians, of whom one is proud, in the possession of a glass bead, or a red feather, and the rest miserable in the want of it."

RALPH WALDO EMERSON (IN "WORK AND DAYS").

Werks passed ere I came out of the stupor and pain into which I had so swiftly drifted after papa's death. Weeks fraught with keenest anxiety to the watchers; leaving me the ghost of my former self. These were followed by days of lethargy, and an apathetic indifference, so great, that I cared as little for life as would a child for a costly gem. Not knowing its worth, I treated it as a bauble, valued it as such, and a contempt for it grew up, like a deadly night-shade, in my soul. Where existed the good of living? I would ask myself in a listless way; Philip does not love me, and papa is dead, so I made no effort to arouse myself, but used to lie, day after day, upon the couch with folded hands and tearless eyes; an untold sense of life's emptiness ever with me. Nothing interested or touched a single chord in my consciousness, excepting

articles which had belonged to my father. Everything which he had once possessed became sacred, and the only exertion I ever made was to creep down to his grave and talk to him as if he could hear me. nothing to lean upon; no confidence or reliance in God to assure me that "all things work together for good." My sorrow seemed irremediable, because the grave shut off his face in a darkness behind which I could not see the light. The apathy passed, then I became possessed with a spirit of restlessness and disquietude calling out against the visitation of God with a peevishness as unwholesome as it was selfish; I so wrapped myself up in my own desolation that Moey's grief seemed to me a far-off thing, totally apart from my own, while she, poor child, was hungering for some evidence of my love towards her.

Meantime strange tidings came to disturb the sombre quietude of our family; rumours of a future unprovided for, and our dear old home passing into other hands. Soon the rumour was verified. Another heir appeared, and, all legal proofs having been forthcoming, we prepared to abdicate its grey old walls and many-memoried rooms. I will explain, as briefly as possible, how this came about. Painful as it is to be deprived of home, and money, at one blow, it is, after all, only a part of the discipline with which God trains many of His truest children. It seems so sore a trial at first: nevertheless, it is often the real distillery of the world's greatest force and power, revealing the grand strata of genius, heart, and character, which an inert, indolent, self-pleasing, life, previously concealed. It strikes the keynote of purer service, grander aims, and loftier purposes, as nothing else could have done. Surely there is little cause for mourning over a temporary loss which, ultimately, develops so much higher gain.

About four months after papa's death we received the tidings that Uncle Alex—papa's oldest brother—had left

a son, now of age, who laid claim to the whole of the property at Elm Hollow. I have previously given you no history of the antecedents of our family, therefore you know nothing concerning Uncle Alex's life and When the news of the latter reached papa he was in the act of starting upon his professional career, having just passed his final examination in the Royal College of Surgeons, and received his diploma. was about to marry, and settle in the town near which Elm Hollow was situated. Of course, papa being the next heir, a great difference was made in his position, and instead of settling down to a hard-working life at his practice of medicine, he took up his abode with his parents, at the home in which we first saw the light of day. Shortly after this event grandpapa died, and papa became the absolute possessor of the estate, with the exception of a settlement of a good allowance upon grandmamma, and a smaller one upon each of the other members of the family.

For twenty years he had enjoyed undisturbed peace and happiness in it, and finally died unknowing, and as little dreaming, that another male heir to the Da

Costas was still living.

It appeared that grandpapa had endeavoured to force Uncle Alex into a matrimonial alliance, for which he had a peculiar distaste, and had threatened to cut off the entail of the estate unless he became obedient to the wishes of his parents. Uncle Alex defied them, and he, having received a legacy of three thousand pounds from a distant branch of the family, determined to leave the Hollow, and "see life."

He did see it in a way most disastrous to us, for he married a Yorkshire lassie belonging to the lower classes—a girl of uncommon beauty and rare womanliness of character, yet utterly beneath us in position.

I, as a child, had heard my grandfather boast that never had a Da Costa made a mésalliance; and even while the word was a dead letter to me I had gloried

in the fact because it was a thing of which he was so proud. At that time I elevated an aristocratic lineage above all else, and was a regular enthusiast over the transcendent qualities of "blue blood," to that which

flowed in the veins of the people.

Now, like "the grand old gardener and his wife," I, too, can smile at the claims of "long descent," and hold that the only nobility is that of goodness. it was not so; it seemed such an inconceivable thing that a Da Costa should degrade himself, and mate with a child of the people! Even while I thus thought the "blue blood" had mingled with that of the commonalty to the full fruition of a greater good than I had ever before dreamt of, while many years were required

to fully teach the lesson.

The result of the union was a son, who cost his mother her life. Uncle Alex left him with his grandparents until he was old enough to be educated as befitted a scion of our house, yet never once attempted to make a confidence of any member of his own family concerning the birth of this little stranger. We do not even know if he grieved or rejoiced over his advent. He settled the remaining portion of his legacy upon the child—about two thousand pounds—and confided the whole of the history of his birth to an old Eton chum, charging him to look after the education of the boy, if anything should happen to him before he could win his mother's indulgence towards his transgression, and thus gain a partisan when he made it known to his father. This friend told us how stringent were Uncle Alex's requests that the boy should know nothing of his parentage until he himself divulged it, unless anything unforeseen should happen, when the boy was to assume his mother's name until he was twenty-one; after which the whole of the story was to be made known, and the claim to Elm Hollow enforced.

If a presentiment of his death had fallen upon him

he could scarcely have given clearer instructions, and commands, about the baby-boy who brought so much of both good and evil in his train. Ere another month had passed Uncle Alex was dead and buried; he was thrown from his horse while hunting, picked up insensible, and died without a word to any one concerning his affairs.

A strange fatality seemed to have fallen upon our family, for both grandpapa and my own darling father also died suddenly, while the younger son (Chrissie's father) was cut off in like manner. Then a break came in our lives, and Uncle Alex's son put in an appearance at Elm Hollow to claim his rightful

inheritance.

Oh, how I resented it! That we who had looked down upon the lower classes as beings into whom God had mayhap breathed a spirit, yet not such blood as ours, unfit for our notice excepting with condescension and allowance, should have to hold out the hand of relationship to one of their children! Nothing could have roused me more, it so filled my soul with scorn and bitterness. I resented it as a queen would resent the familiarity of a subject, and towered in lofty indignation over the usurper.

At first I disclaimed all belief in his story, but facts, with lawful rights, are stubborn things, before which even indignation and pride must bow down; so I had to descend from the pedestal of injured and indignant wrath to the knowledge that we were almost penniless.

Then ensued a nine days' wonder in our neighbourhood, after which Alex da Costa, née Burchell, came to take possession of the old ancestral hall, which I had

fondly hoped was ours for ever!

He proved to be an old collegial friend of Philip's, and one of whom he had spoken in glowing and enthusiastic terms. This seemed to me an added weight to the injury he wrought! I wish to be very truthful about this part of my story, for the sake of what

followed, and because the usurper's eyes will follow out, to its bearing, every line which my pen traces, deducting from it all words spoken against as well as for him!

From the first he received my bitter hatred; my dislike for Chrissie was a thousandfold intensified in his case; and I vowed an awful vow—full of wrath and anger—that I would at a future day be revenged upon him for the state of mind into which his advent drove us.

The facts were these: When once he had taken possession, Moey, Chrissie, and I, would have about a hundred pounds per year to live upon, Aunt Isobel another hundred, and Philip fifty until he was called to some Congregational church as its pastor. All this, following after a luxurious life and an adequate supply of money for all our wants, seemed a catastrophe too dire to be realised.

After all, it is an old experience—almost as ancient as the old, old, story which came into the world when love planned its redemption—that "riches take to themselves wings and flee away."

Do you know what it is to say "good-bye" to your childhood's home?—to go into every room, every nook, the old playground, the old nursery with its childish memories, and then feel the hot gush of tears as you fathom the bitterness of the thought that these are going into other hands for ever? Happy places grow holy, and through the long after years we remember them as we cherish our highest good. All this we experienced, trying to hush the tumult of feeling which would surge through heart and brain.

Chrissie proved invaluable; she took the planning of everything into her own hands, making us feel that we had some one else to lean upon in addition to Philip. Let me look back upon the last night we spent in the dear, dear, Hollow, where all our sweetest memories clustered. I

view the whole scene exactly as then; it was one of those warm, delicious, days which so often herald the brightness of the summer. Nature was lulling herself with the soft brooding of her own many-voiced songs; it seemed as if a tremulous quivering of sounds made the whole—half-sleepy—singing which danced through every breath with a

slow, melodious, step.

I love Nature best when she is in this wonderfullybeautiful mood; so strangely sweet, that a feeling of sadness commingled with joy creeps over every fibre of my being, until I long to throw myself upon her perfumed, odour-laden breast, and crave from her the secret of her glad yet brooding joy! I believe now that this wonderful yearning is, after all, naught but the soul's crying out for the protection and love of the Hand that calls forth so much beauty from darkness; a voice inly trying to make itself heard above the tempest of our battling humanity and our spiritual torpor. That night I went to my darling's grave, knowing that on the morrow, when the sun gilded the west, I should be far away from its quietude and the mortal remains of the one I held dearest. I threw myself upon it in an abandonment to sorrow so terrible that even to-day I hardly dare remember it; my whole frame quivered with the intense and increasing agony of my woe while I mounted out my heart to him.

I looked up to the sky and could gain no comfort; heaven was so far off, that even papa could not hear my crying, I argued; for it is so difficult for us mortals to realise that the heaven for which we cry is ever round about us, that the ministering spirits of our dead encompass us, even while we cry for their sympathy and their love. Never severed from us excepting that they have put off mortality which we can see, and wear immortality which only our spiritual eye can discern! My sight was blinded with the darkness which God alone can remove, so that I failed to see my minister-

ing angels near me! So many days of pain, so many hours of twilight, might have merged into glorious noon-tide brightness!

I turned to the house in which I had spent my days, looked at its grey old walls, over which the deeptinted leaves were fast growing in their spring verdure, then moved from the grave—after kissing its sods over and over again—and went home, passing the schools and the almshouses on my way. For the first time I was struck with the thought of the difference which would ensue in Moey's life. She had been the Lady Bountiful, going amongst the people with open hands and loving heart, relieving all distress, and sympathising with all woe, until she had made a personal friend of nearly every one in the village. Now all this would be at an end, for we were going away from them almost as poor as paupers. I stood, amid the fragrance of the spring flowers, and wildly rebelled against the hardness of our lot. I almost wished that I could curse God and die; for life was a gift as dark as it was unsolicited, and I hated it with a growing hatred.

Yet He was leading me, through the gloaming, to a land of love, in which the hatred grew into a reverent and holy thanksgiving; the gift into a luminous beauty, surpassing anything of which I had ever dreamt.

I was standing at the portal of life—real working life—itself, as I had never stood at it before. God was opening up a way where the tangled briers and sharp thorns alone seemed growing, and though the light which grew into my life was a softened and subdued one, it was still a holy radiance, emanating from the only undying source of light.

I that night closed the book in which I wrote of self alone; and, though with faltering fingers, opened a page in my history—one in which I earnestly strove to forget self and remember others.

I took the first step towards the work God had provided for my hands to do.

### CHAPTER IX.

#### ANOTHER DREAM BEGINS.

THE following evening I was sitting with the quiet twilight of a rainy spring evening closing round me, many miles away from the dear old town in which I first saw the light of day. I was thinking of Longfellow's lines—

"I see the lights of the village,
As they gleam through the rain and mist,
And a feeling of sadness comes o'er me
That my soul cannot resist.

"A feeling of sadness and longing,
That is not akin to pain,
And resembles sorrow only
As the mist resembles rain."

Then I commenced moralising over the steady rain which had fallen into my lot instead of the mist of which the poet sang. Looking out upon the quaint old country village of H-, I saw it in its most sombre guise. It is at no time a cheerful place, with its strange, misshapen old houses, gabled and strawthatched; but that night its desolation seemed supreme, as I watched the firelight within the houses blinking through the diamond-paned, mutilated, win-It is such a unique old village, with a queer, dilapidated church and old-fashioned graveyard—not a peaceful, country, resting-place, by any means, but an over-crowded square patch of ground, where village children play in quarrelsome humour over the broken headstones which point out the home of the bones of their forefathers. An unsociable village it looks, for

the houses do not nestle together as you find them in other villages, creeping close to one another as if for protection and support during the chill blasts of winter. Here they stand solitary and alone, with a reckless spirit of independence which is not supported by the fact of many of them having lost a gable, a chimney-pot, or some other trifle of that description. In addition to this, upon that evening, there was a friendly donkey in a bare orchard opposite (who seemed to have taken a great liking for me, and appeared to be thinking whether or no he had met me in a previous state), furnishing a satire upon life by endeavouring to fraternise with a couple of horses who treated his proffered friendship with scorn. Then I fell to wondering if in some familiar scene in which I had acted my friends in the neighbourhood of Elm Hollow would think with love of the girl who was, at one blow, cut off from everything. I thought of an exquisite little bit of real English country close to Elm Hollow—a beautiful shady-dell through which you passed to mount the hill of E-; and my whole soul revolted at the thought of calling this village of H—— home.

Even now I look back with dread upon its straight dusty roads in summer, and its wet muddy ones in winter, without a single beauty to relieve them. No ferns, no flowers, nothing but great beds of stinging-nettles and high dry hedges of most wonderful lengths and dimensions.

I used to pace their dreary roads with restless spirit, revolving the sad vicissitudes of life with a scorn as bitter as it was sinful, nursing my grief instead of unceasingly striving to subdue it. No love creeping in as a sweetener of the toilsome days which followed excepting Moey's and Chrissie's, the latter's being thoroughly distrusted by me; for I did not yet comprehend the beauty of character attained by her when she proved her affection for her enemy. My heart was

ever turning with a ceaseless pain to the loves I had lost.

That first evening we gathered around the fire—I, in chilly, sullen, silence, Moey in desponding mood, and Chrissie bright and hopeful as the wisest friend could be, Philip oppressed with our trouble, and Aunt Isobel brooding and moody as myself, until presently we fell to talking about our future. The change was so great, no more rounds of shopping, morning calls, or afternoon nap to fill up the time, but life in its reality had to be faced. I tried to fancy myself back in our old cool, lofty, oak-panelled, rooms as the close stuffiness of our new abode made itself felt almost to suffocation, but the oppressiveness made it impossible to do so.

Philip began, with a great display of gaiety meant to disguise his pain, "It looks bad enough, does it not? but now we shall be working bees instead of drones; this shall be our hive into which we will store our gathered sweetness." Then going on more gravely, he said, "After all, we may make a happy little home although we are so poor. Let us each try and bear it as bravely as we can."

Then I came out of my moody silence, saying, "Could I not go out as a governess? we cannot all live here on our income without some one works. Moey is too delicate; beside, she will not need it long, and," here I glanced at Chrissie, "I suppose no one

else would care to go."

Then Chrissie brought her plain, practical sense to bear upon the matter. "You are right, Maggie, but you know nothing of the life of a governess; it is not the fact of being treated as an inferior which makes her life so dreary; it is the burdensome toil of her everyday experience, without any power of her own to desist from teaching when she wearies of it. Why couldn't you and I take a few pupils at home and give music lessons, teach the languages, and

drawing, and then we could relieve each other?" My good angel prompted me to answer her properly, so, striving to bury my selfishness, I assented to her proposition; but the question arose, Who would certify to our capabilities of teaching, and to whom could we

apply for pupils?

Moey's face made me anxious for her. I was just -as by an inspiration-awakening to the fact that this trouble was telling on her almost beyond endurance, while, like a flash of light, the thought presented itself, "Supposing Moey should also die." As quickly as this came I put it from me, but it made my manner more tender than it had been since my father's death. I took her hand in mine, and the look of blank astonishment on her face too plainly showed how great a barrier between us I had allowed my grief to build. In my heart I believe the change from affluence to poverty affected Moey more than any of us, for she learnt to pine with heart-sick longing for the grand shady woods of the Hollow, with their cool undergrowth of moss and ferns, for the sweet wafture of their breezes, and for the old garden, with its trellis-walks and rose-coloured alcoves; still she never betrayed a word to this effect. However, as yet, we were only getting our first taste of its bitterness, when we sat discussing the days which were to come. Thank God, our lives are in His hand, or how hard we should find the discovery of their frequently-recurring revelations!

We soon found that the resolve to keep a school did not bring pupils, neither did repeated advertisements. We were also continually struggling against the shyness we felt with regard to our new undertaking and the people amongst whose children we wished to find our bread. What our lives were only those who have been similarly situated can estimate. Of course, we had no friends in our own former position, and the people in our present one were totally dissimilar in all

their tastes and pursuits. "Proud" and "haughty" were among the least offensive of the comments, upon our reserve and seclusion, by the neighbours, while they, poor souls, were no losers through the distance which our likes and dislikes placed between us, for our education in manners and means could never have assimilated with theirs, and a frightful incongruity in such friendships must inevitably have resulted. Again, amid minor annovances, I was literally stifled with the closeness of my bedroom, the cause being its small dimensions. Shall I ever forget my first night in it? When I went up to take off my travelling gear I sat down upon one of the chairs, and almost gasped for breath; the place was so confined and cramped that I literally seemed unable to breathe. Throwing open the window to its utmost width, I sat there heedless of the indriving rain, and wondered if I should be able to live in it all through the night! This feeling of being almost coffined by its smallness never totally left me. Then its furniture! used to smile in derision at the sampler over the mantelpiece! it was one of our landlady's earliest efforts, and had been duly framed in a funereal-looking enclosure, while the worked lines proclaimed—

> "'Tis religion that can give Sweetest comfort while we live; 'Tis religion must supply Solid comfort when we die,'

followed by the age of the worker, and the date upon which this extraordinary-looking article had been completed. The derision was called forth by the fact that in our apartments religion was really almost the only comfort we could get, and of this we had abundance, but unfortunately it was of that spurious sort which always gives beholders a peculiar distaste for its exhibition.

They used to hold cottage prayer-meetings in their kitchen, and I believe nothing could have more em-

bittered me against Dissenters than did the conduct of these people; they shouted, they sang, and they prayed with a fervour that was unmistakable, but a piety and reverence very questionable; then, this being over, our landlady proceeded to adapt herself to the daily duties of her life. She was honest, as she persistently informed us when numerous articles vanished from our larder. One day the cat consumed nearly half a shoulder of mutton and looked none the Puss also proved an epicurean in her fatter for it. taste; she loved all tarts, and doted upon Worcester sauce, while tea and coffee were her favourite beverages: she, evidently, being possessed of the faculty of making the latter ready for herself. To her credit, be it spoken, puss did not attend the prayermeetings, for she was always to be found slinking away from those demonstrations and taking refuge in our rooms.

Our landlady always most anxiously vindicated herself, until I used to make a mental comparison between the religion she professed and the folly of her practices, while I desecrated it by analysing her conduct, and then setting it down as the religion of the whole species of her set. Chrissie treated the outcomes of her dishonesty with remarkable plainness, and after the theft of the mutton proceeded to weigh the cat, but of course the poor animal was many ounces lighter than the joint stolen; thus for once the woman was completely abashed.

These little episodes gave me many opportunities of sneering at religion in the abstract, but Chrissie always met my disparagement of it by the reminders of my father's noble life, or with words of brave, fearless, outspoken confession of her own faith in God. I believe she was thoroughly sceptical as to creeds, but for true religion, she had a pre-eminent adoration and passion. She had a firmly-rooted conviction that Christianity did not consist of aught that is tangible,

though the material worship so often prompts the spiritual, while she never questioned the certainty of the works of faith and true believing, I was always hovering on the verge of unbelief, questioning God and the doings of His people; she had cast anchor within the veil, and therefore was unmovable with regard to her belief.

The innumerable apparent contradictions of the Bible were to me a stumbling-block, to her they were the things to be revealed of God in His own good time. Christianity itself was to my mind an unsolved problem; to hers it was one of which she had internal demonstration.

My secret self-communings all turned one way, and I began to feel after the higher comfort for which my better nature craved, yet God seemed to stand in the way of such search. I felt as if I could not love Him, and in all my introspective moods this feeling ever entered, "God deals too hardly with us mortals."

It would be useless to write of a life without giving insight into its mental perception and its agonised battles with itself, and as no two souls go through the same phases of battle, so the intricacies of it can only be made known by a faithful history of its acute inward life. I had not yet summed up religion into the noble words of one of our truest men, "Do your duty, and heaven itself, the veritable kingdom of God, is within you."

"Do noble things, not dream them all day long, And so make life, death, and that vast forever One grand, sweet song."

Ay, our duty to God and man; quietly, silently, it may be, until it seems to us little else but petty cares and wearisome duties, yet if done with faithfulness for God forming the sweetest melodies of that song. If I had only known this at the time how surely it would have lightened the drear path God was calling me to tread. Almost without knowledge of it, the first

dawning of new life began to stir at my soul. I was losing my selfishness, and learning to think more of others, and above everything else I was beginning to feel that my drifting, aimless life of the former days had been full of idle aspirations, and not real longings after a dignity of greatness attainable for all who properly strive for it. We had been in H—— exactly a year, with little result as to pupils, but with much as regarded our unity as a family, and our progress in usefulness, when something happened to break its monotony. We had also grown more accustomed to our poverty, while bright and glowing hopes were again dawning in my horizon of life over a fresh dream which had found an entrance into it.

When at the Hollow papa had entertained many literary lions who had revelled in the beauties of our home, climbed its steeps with us, and sat under its shady trees, drawing in the glorious sweetness of the place with every breath, and receiving our adoration in no stinted measure.

From our earliest childhood a warm love of talent and genius had been inculcated into our very souls, so that no poverty of silver on their part had ever made us look upon them with anything but reverential awe and love, because of the superiority of mind over matter; we therefore held all artists and men of like calibre in high esteem, and when one of their number found his way down to the village of H----, we were in a state of high delight and glee. Tempted by the trout streams, he had come to spend a quiet month in search of health and renewed brain powers, little thinking that in its queer old streets, and old-fashioned houses. he would find the children—who once danced with him over the green-sward of a magnificent ancestral dwelling-place, or stood on the tiptoe of expectation to see the party of hunters start for the meet, to which he went furnished with the best horse in their father's stables—of his old friend in poverty such as ours. He brought my dream with him, and it was no fault of his if it proved as perishable as the visions which had preceded it.

# CHAPTER X.

THE GATE OF A NEW LIFE.

"The web of our life is of a mingled yarn, good and ill together."

"ALL'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL."

STRANGELY enough, my good fortune came to me, or rather, the opening of the way to it, just after one of my most desponding moods. I had been wondering if life must always go on thus, with no break in its dreariness, no alleviation for its monotony, when Mr. Haverill first came to our little village, putting out despairing hands over lost pleasures when he opened up this, to me, dazzling future. I have purposely refrained from giving you his real name because it is now a household word in almost every nook of our Fatherland.

In quiet country places like H—— even going to church becomes an excitement and helps to pass the long hours away, therefore I became a most constant worshipper both on the Sabbath and during the week. One Wednesday evening I was leisurely sauntering down the hill, leading to our home, when I saw a familiar form approaching, with a creel flung carelessly over his shoulder, and a fishing-rod in his hand. The

face was still more familiar, but I vainly ransacked my memory in the endeavour to call to mind where and when I had seen it before; we passed each other, and no recognition took place, for even had he known of our residence in H—— my face was closely veiled, and my carriage was no longer the buoyant one of other days, for I was growing sad and staid in that as in all else. Two days elapsed before my recollection of the circumstances of our former intercourse flashed upon me, and then, on the third morning while doing my hair, I remembered his name, and proceeded to electrify Moey by exclaiming to her, "Mr. Haverill is staying in H——. I met him a few days ago with a lot of fishing appurtenances, but I could not remember who he was!"

Suffice to tell you that we soon discovered his lodgings, for H— was far too small a place to hold a stranger without its neighbours being fully cognisant of his whereabouts, his fortune, and many other matters of history relative to his well-being, of which he remained in total ignorance. No one ever came to this delightful place but each of its inhabitants, before the close of his first week there, knew the whole genealogy of his family. If he had none it caused them little or no trouble, because they simply brought their inventive genius to bear upon the matter, and he was at once supplied with an uninterrupted line of villainous antecedents as false as the usual sequel of their stories could possibly make the member who kept up the concatenation of his line. "Alas for the rarity of Christian charity!" If I were to write the annals of that neighbourhood, as given by its respective householders, you would hear such a history as would for ever blacken humanity in your eyes; for their scandal was not confined to the business of outsiders and their relative gradations in the scale of crime, but it touched every individual resident with its vile breath: consequently, each new comer was at

first an angel, and afterwards something little lower than a murderer, escaped from the hands of the person who metes out justice to such criminals. Or else he came there for the sake of curing himself of kleptomania, dipsomania, or some other mania requiring an equal amount of secrecy and justification. I am not over-stating these facts—this village still exists, and woe be to the unlucky man or woman who seeks peace within its borders. No intimation of this fact had ever reached Mr. Haverill, hence his fishing expedition to its neighbourhood. Before he left it we were engaged to each other according to the "they say" of its gossips, and wondrous were the histories of distant Haverills which were raked up. In this gossip there was not an iota of truth, for the dream he brought with him was not one of love but ambition.

This was no second chapter of a story such as Philip's and mine had been; yet it pleased the outsiders to think that such was the case. Mr. Haverill was almost as old as papa, and grey with the hard study of life's book; in addition to this, he was himself a fond and affectionate father, and all the kind care and advice which he gave me, was prompted by a noble fatherly heart, and a pure pity for the child who had so early lost a father's solicitude over her welfare.

When we had discovered, and made ourselves known to him, he glanced at our heavy mourning draperies with an unconcealed sympathy, which made his greeting as tender as it was grateful to us in our loneliness. Somehow I at once gave him a place in my heart such as I had never given when he was our guest at the Hollow. You see we were then surrounded by numberless friends, excluding us from the feeling which an individual care and love can give when we are separated from all but one or two peculiar friends; so his grasp of the hand was something like the nectar of the gods to our loneliness and pain; it so cheered and warmed our souls. He asked

no questions concerning our bereavement, and this, as all suffering hearts will know, was the best course he could have pursued, for few things are harder than to answer cold, wordy questions concerning the desolation which comes after death, the very thought of which is ever, with passionate pain, surging uppermost in our minds. It is only when friendship draws us soul to soul that we can voluntarily speak of the grief through which we have passed, and it is only when we thus speak that we give any really truthful

impression of its magnitude.

Mr. Haverill had bought this experience, therefore he accompanied us home, drawing our attention to various architectural blemishes in the village church, but without making any remarks which could possibly remind us of the time when the earth became so empty, and so silent, to us who were left behind. His good breeding shone conspicuously in the manner with which he came into our stuffy drawing-room; there was no affected concern to wound us, no look of surprise at our surroundings; for he took his seat with the same air of ease as he would have taken it in the Hollow, chatting pleasantly of the sport he had enjoyed, and eliciting from us many confidential disclosures concerning our hatred of the whole place, until the sight of a face which had been familiar at the old home so warmed our hearts that he soon knew the entire history of our changed fortunes.

"You must come down to our place!" he exclaimed enthusiastically, as we finished our sub rosâ descriptions of almost everything which had hurt and pained us during the past year. "Come and stay as long as you like; you will then get your roses back. Won't Clarice and Eva make a grand 'to do' if you will only let them pet you to their hearts' content. My girls are regular women for caressing and making much of people, so they will soon make you happy, and then, when you have had a rest, we must find

something more congenial and profitable for you to do

than this attempt at teaching appears to be."

The result of the foregoing conversation was speedily seen, for Mrs. Haverill soon sent us a warmly-expressed letter of invitation, and after many consultations as to the state of our respective wardrobes, also much refitting and planning, one morning in May we found ourselves in one of the prettiest of villas in the most charming suburb of London. It could scarcely be, rightly, called a villa; it was more like a small park, while no expense seemed to have been spared in beautifying it. Since then many, many, happy hours of my life have I spent on its sunny lawn, and in its pleasant plantations, yet, perhaps, none so rarely sweet as those I lived during my first visit there.

It was such a change to come back to something approaching the old luxurious life; and as the neat carriage and glossy bay horses turned in at the gates, two bright, handsome, girls came rushing down the broad, gravelled avenue to welcome us, and waiving all ceremony, they commenced their greeting with a warmth of welcome which entirely disarmed any strictures we might otherwise have passed upon their lack of lady-like self-possession. Never before or since have I felt so thoroughly at home in a strange place as I felt that night when bonnie, handsome, Eva asked if she might come into my room for a chat. I acquiesced, and she literally whiled away the time with her pleasant talk, until I was, for a moment. forgetful of all the hardness of life, and beguiled into a frame of mind far happier than any I had known since my father's death. Irresistibly drawn to her I spoke of our ever-abiding sorrow, of the hard life of toil and solitude which we daily lived, until I felt as if I could almost pour out my whole soul to her. only papa had lived the poverty would not have been so dreadful," I said in conclusion.

"He does live gloriously, fully, and purely, as do all God's loved," she answered. "Never think of him as dead, dear; if my father died I should like to feel him ever looking down upon me with those 'Larger other eyes than ours,' and never even dream of him as far away. I do not believe God shuts them right away from sympathy with us, when He calls them to higher, other life than ours! Never, never, think thus, dear," she said, wishing me a loving good-night. "Hold to the faith that they are 'near us when we climb or fall,' and then it will be an incentive to nobler

life and not a drawback to happiness."

When she had gone to her own room I thought of the words spoken, and wondering over them I again unconsciously prayed to my dead, crying out to him for light, wondering if he heard my wild entreaties and strivings after some fairer goal than aught of which I personally knew. Then came the bitter cry of which I have previously spoken, wrung from anguished lips, white with the intensity of my mental pain. It came forth like a wail, growing into a great and exceeding sorrowful cry, "O Lord, Thou knowest." I fell on the floor in a perfect agony, crying out this one sentence. To this day I do not know if in the philosophy of any creed these words could be called a prayer; but I do know that it was a soul's cry, in its extremity, and that it was a spirit searching after God. How long I reiterated my moan I do not know; the anguish of the warfare was upon me, and at such times we do not count our living by the hours that fly away from us. We tell them up by the travail of soul and its after-fruits!

Ere a week had passed Eva and I were fast friends. She had shown me her portfolio of verses and sketches, while I had confided to her that, in my earlier days, I had tried my 'prentice hand upon some short historical stories for children, also upon legendary ones, to suit the mental capacities of older girls and boys.

"Do show them to papa," she entreated, "he might get the editor of some magazine to do something with them."

"But I have destroyed them long ago," I answered; they were only first efforts, and I laughed heartily

over them as I grew older."

"I wish you would try some more, and let papa see them; beside, if they were anything worth you would get paid for them, and it is so jolly to feel that you earned the money out of your own head. Papa once got me half-a-guinea for a poem, and I had the piece of gold bored, and now I always wear it upon my chain. See," she laughingly exclaimed, as she held it up for my inspection, "I used to call it my first-fruits; but since nothing more has followed it I call it my 'Benjamin,' for it was the last in addition to being the first."

I could not help smiling as she exhibited it, for it was looking old and thin about the edges, as if she

had worn it several years.

"When was this poetical effusion published?" I queried.

Echoing my laugh she told me, "More than four

**year**s ago.'

"Then if I earned ten-and-sixpence in four years I ought to be satisfied, you think?" I went on, teasingly.

"No; nothing of the sort. You see I was careless and indifferent about it just when I ought to have studied and worked hard, the consequence being that for four successive times I utterly failed in my productions when the editor asked for further 'copy.' So he shook his magnificent head over me—and it was a grand old pate, too—then consigned my rising name to oblivion by conducing to the still more wonderful swelling of the waste-basket. Papa quotes Shakesspeare to me to the effect that 'To write and read comes by nature,' and so it may for aught I know; but if it does nature needs a most enormous amount

of stirring and polishing before the thing that she brings forth is worth the name of 'readable.' I do so wish you would try and see if she is more kind to you, so that the ordinary amount of success may attend her, and not be nipped in the bud as in my case."

So this child-woman rattled on, sowing the seeds of a strong ambition for fame, or something of its kind, which should make life worth living.

When a woman is not yet twenty, fame is gilded with the brightest fancies of life's morning; when she lives another ten years, she knows it for what it is, a delusive phantom that dances before, but never satisfies, her feelings; the gist of life is not in things such as these.

Eva did more than rouse this sleeping lion of ambition; she spoke to her father about my former literary attempts, and he in turn talked to me about them; talked earnestly and seriously, asking me to let him see some effort of my pen.

With much trepidation I set to work and planned the outline of a story, which I afterwards carefully filled in and submitted to his inspection. anxiously I awaited his verdict, while I could hardly restrain my impatience as day after day passed, bringing with it no allusion to this my first literary venture. Fifteen days went by, and I was just wondering if I could muster enough courage to speak to Mr. Haverill about it, when he put a letter into my hand and told me to read it. My face burnt, my hands turned cold, as I perused the lines from the editor, to whom my first venture had been sent; they were few, but to the point, "My composition lacked finish, but showed some little power which might be further developed by most careful study, of the style of our best English writers. He enclosed five-and-twenty shillings for it, that being at the rate of three shillings per printed page, and would look at any others I had, but could

make no promises concerning their use, excepting conditional ones." My reader, I was prouder of that tiny cheque than I had been of the largest my father had ever given me during our prosperity.

Thus I entered, as I supposed, the gates of an El

Dorado inexhaustible.

I was half mad with delight over the new prospects opening up before me; I saw myself in the future with the laurels of fame upon my brow, and listened to the plaudits of a world for whom I had lain my genius upon paper. "Love is lost," I cried, "I will now live for fame, surely it will be a fairer taskmaster and yield a richer guerdon of happiness." Oh! my heart, what answer comes back to you now, as you sit in the silence looking at the basis upon which you built such a superstructure? Was it, after all, worth while to build upon so frail a foundation? I can hardly fancy that I am the same girl, who looked at the substructure with such glowing pride and calculated with sanguine temperament upon the glory with which I would crown it. O Life, is there aught in thee to compensate to mortals for the theft of after years, for the gloaming that rides over the summer sun? I will not think of these things; I will put them from me with resolute hand, for I dare not, even through the mist of tears, fully describe the failing or success of my second dream.

Mr. Haverill's advice was not wanting, and as its soundness and good sense were evident, I here give it for the benefit of all young literary aspirants. It was the afternoon of the day upon which I had received my publisher's letter, that I went into the library for a book of quotations, and there I received, first congratulations, then, advice.

"If you intend to make it a profession," he said, "take it up seriously, earnestly, and prayerfully; resolve, at all risks, to conquer every difficulty that besets your path; wear its honours as meekly as you

bear its, ofttimes, fruitless endeavours. Literature is no easy path, my dear; it is one full of briers and thorns, bedewed with many anxious tears, and rough and perilous with false reasonings and vain allurements. If God has given to you this grand, great, gift, handle it tenderly, but strongly, as something too precious to crush, and yet so frail that all your strength of mind and body must be given to it."

"Is it so arduous a task?" I asked, as I saw that he

felt every word he uttered.

"It is more than that," was his answer; "it is one of suffering as well as work; to write of the bitterness of life you must drink deeply of the gall; to pen words of its strife you dare do naught else than stand in the thickest of the fight; to comfort others you must first have known the sorrow; to teach the lessons of life you are obliged to learn in its school. Child, if God calls you to this path, He will give you strength, but little do you yet know what it means to tread it."

"All writers do not feel this," I cried, as I grew half frightened at his strange fervour of speech. "Surely

all do not drink of this cup?"

"Perhaps not; yet all truly useful ones have done so. I dare assert that no living man or woman has penned 'Words that breathe and thoughts that burn,' without they have passed through this baptism of fire. To speak to the heart of man you must have a personal knowledge of its language and its life; all other writ-

ings are futile and vain."

The night following this conversation was a strange one to me; I tossed, restlessly, upon my pillow, following out the train of thought which Mr. Haverill had opened up. I asked myself, Was I ready to offer myself to this work, to train myself for it by hard reading, study of human character, an active and everready sympathy with humanity? Picturing the joys and sorrows of such must mean "Weeping with those who weep, rejoicing with those who do rejoice," and

I dared not say I was prepared for this. "Shall I be famous?" was the uppermost thought in my heart. "Will men and women laud my name? In the years to come shall I sit down to receive my countrymen's applause and admiration?" Here my unanswered questions grew into speculations, and the first grand thought vibrating through the heart of all worthy litterateurs was lulled to sleep amid visionary phantoms of future greatness.

Sometimes I think that if, in the first place, I had taken God's gift, and offered it to Him as an oblation for His bounty, He might have perfected it into a thing of earthly fame; but, alas, such was not the case! I was proud over the beginning I had made, and exulted in it, spite of all warnings from the truest of my friends. I do not wish be unjust, even to myself, concerning the relating of this eventful part of my history; I did not always disregard my yearnings after God and His Sometimes the unsatisfied cravings of my teachings. soul would burst all bonds, and cry out in an agony for something to fill it, until with intense writhing of spirit I almost longed to die and quit the warfare, but these moanings of a discontented heart I quelled with promises of a future search for something with which to remove its emptiness. Girls, my readers, who have passed through the same phase of life, do you not understand me? My spiritual craved for God, but my material hated Him. If I were to try for ever I could put it in no plainer words than these. I was warring the dreadful warfare 'twixt flesh and spirit, and only the Master of all knew which would come off conqueror.

I learnt so much during my stay with the Haverills. Eva initiated me into the mysteries of her every-day life, and how grand that life was no pen can ever tell; it was so quietly noble, so truly beautiful. She was the ever-ready confidente of every soul round about

her home, who stood in need of a friend, tending to the sick, finding hope in the depths of despair, taking the very sting out of poverty, she went amongst the poor of London even as Moey had done at the Hollow. It was a life which I, in my inertness and laziness, could not understand; it was so full of helpful sympathy. I think I shall never forget her sweet ministration and gentle sympathy in cases where I could find no word of love or consolation.

We returned again to our home at H——, to the old dirt and confusion, to the bitter parade of religion as we found it there, and yet I ever carried about with me the remembrance of Eva's Christian character. Our landlady kept up her old habits to such an extent that we found it almost impossible to put up with her peculations. Philip advised a change; saying, and rightly, that our scheme of living in apartments had failed, therefore we must try another plan; so he took the matter into his own hands, and decided that we should take a little house about two miles on the other side of H——.

Here I must record another thing which transpired ere we finally left our apartments in this village. The tiny cheque which was the first-fruits of my literary efforts remained in my possession, and I put it to a use which will give you some idea of the way I loved my dear old home, and also throw some light upon after events. I had repeatedly urged Chrissie to take it into the house-keeping money, but in spite of all my entreaties both she and Aunt Isobel had resolutely refused to do. They were amenable to any scheme concerning the spending of the outcome of future literary efforts, but not of this first five-and-twenty shillings.

One evening I grew heartsick with the longing to see once more my darling's grave, and gaze again at the grey old house I so loved. My longings grew into a resolve, I would see it at all risks. Daylight did not lessen the strength of my resolutions, for as the grey dawn came in at the window, I had planned a visit to it. Knowing that the mail train passed through the village of H—— to the grey old town near which the Hollow lay, I conceived the idea of going by it to visit the home I had never ceased to love; an early train would bring me back again before six the next morning, and none would be the wiser as to my adventure. I would await a moonlight night, and then see for myself the battlements in which I used to glory.

The night came, and after persuading Moey—on the score of a severe headache—to sleep with Chrissie, I put on my out-door gear, and with many fears regarding my discovery, slipped the bolts of the door, and stood out in the cold, white, moonlight, with no thought in my mind but the successful carrying out of my expedition.

I reached the station, took my ticket with an assumption of haughty nonchalance, which even the stares of the porters could not abash, and, whirled along at express speed, finally got out at the old, familiar, station. It was long past midnight, and I had a good four miles to walk, so I gathered up my skirts in my hand, and started off on the lonely road, absorbed with but one idea—to get to my father's grave.

No amount of description will convey to you the tumult of feeling which surged over me when I reached it, and once more put my lips to the green sods covering the mound. I sat down by it as of yore, forgetting the hour and all else, remembering only that fortune, friends, and home had gone with him; and there, in my dead father's name, I vowed to win back the home we had lost. Carried away by excess of feeling, I grew half demented with the thoughts crowding over me, and lifting my hands towards the moonlight canopy above, I exclaimed aloud, "God help me to win it back!"

What idle dreams, and vague, visionary notions of legal points led me to assume such a possibility I can

never tell, I can only write the plain truth. As I stood there, calling upon God, as a soul calls in extremity, humanity, instead of Deity, answered me, for the usurper's voice fell upon my ear, and I fell

swooning on the grave.

Enticed by the glorious beauty of the night he had wandered out, and found his way to the quiet "God's acre" in which his ancestors were sleeping, at the same time finding another of his race, of whose identity he was scarcely sure. He has since told me of his horror when the true situation of my case first broke upon him, then he promptly proceeded to meet

the emergency.

When I had partially recovered from the effects of my faintness, I begged of him never to disclose my secret, and feeling myself in his power with regard to it, I tried to treat him with courtesy and some degree of friendliness. He accompanied me across the fields to the station, where, for the first time, the mad rashness of the step I had taken fully revealed itself, for he stayed outside its gates, and, holding out his hand to me, said, "It must be good-bye here, for the porters will know both of us." This thought had not struck me. I had been afraid of being talked about in H—concerning my midnight expedition, but my mad excitement had made me indifferent and unthinking of what the servants at the Hollow Station would say.

Taking out his watch, and standing under the light of the solitary station lamp, he said, "You still have nearly an hour to wait. Would it not be better for you to be walking about instead of standing? Let

us go up this lane, shall we?"

Almost unthinkingly, I turned up the road with him, and thus, in a state of mind almost chaotic, I walked side by side with my enemy, or rather the man whom I had elected as such.

"I wish you would all come back to the Hollow," he said, after a silence, in which I had been thinking of my foolhardy journey. "Could you not? You,

Moey, and Philip, and all?" he went on, with an apparent nervousness, which barely escaped showing itself even in his voice.

"How could we?" I asked, half-dreamily, for the events of the night were telling upon my strength, and I was longing for nothing else but the quiet rest

my body so much needed.

"Very well, indeed, if you only would," was his answer. "I am lonely enough, in all faith. This place is to you a home, the spot you love most; to me it is merely a possession which"—and here his passion overmastered him—"would to God I had never seen! Do you think I have no feeling? Can you imagine I do not fret and fume against the very fact that I took it from two girls whose father left them, as he believed, possessors of it, and that I turned them out into a world which is not 'roselined' even to the rich? Do you think I am made of stone?"

A few moments later he seemed half ashamed of his passionate outburst, for he spoke quietly of his loneliness, and proffered us a home, in the familiar place, as a subject might have tendered his hospitality to the Royal family. He pleaded, "Philip and I were always friends, and this place has fixed a gulf between us. There is no help for it; he will not, and I cannot, bridge it. This place has robbed me of my greatest good, and day by day the loss grows greater."

"We could never live as pensioners upon your bounty," I answered, as the mournfulness of the man's tones smote in upon my chaos of feeling. "We are

Da Costas," I proudly added.

"So am I," he answered. "Surely in families there

can be no charity."

"In families so widely severed such a thing may exist," I coldly rejoined.

Again the silence fell between us, while the soft

twittering of birds, just awaking to the fact that

another day had come to birth, filled the pause.

My mourning draperies were heavy with the night dews, and my feet were almost faltering with weariness, but still we walked on, I with a resistless feeling that above all things I must break this silence, when the task was taken out of my hands. Coming suddenly to a standstill, he took up his position against a gate which barred our progress, and in tones half haughty, by reason of their constraint, he said, "You will not come back on any other terms, will

you do so as my wife?"

Astonishment fairly overcame me. My indignation was so great that I could hardly speak, then I poured it forth in words of contempt and bitterness unspeakable. I have said unspeakable, and yet I spoke bitterly and contemptuously enough without giving expression to the full measure of it. "You insult me," I cried, my heart almost bursting with scorn. "Was it not enough to drive us from home and people without adding to it a deeper insult and injury? I hated you before, now I shall never hate you again, for contempt leaves no room for hate! Do you think I have been driven so low, beaten down to such an extent, as to marry for a home? No! a thousand times No! See," I exclaimed, pointing to the gloomy walls of the workhouse looming in the distance, "I would rather die inside that place than marry you!" I turned away from him, and walked rapidly towards the station, longing, with strange unrest, to put a greater distance between us, for this man whom I had vowed to hate was regarding me with a wistfulness of expression as startling as it was new to my experience.

Shall I ever forget how much happiness I put from me that day, and for many years after? True, the wooing was premature, but it was genuine and real, therefore it called for, at least, womanly handling and

not the utter, wilful, scorn it received.

My beautiful grey eyes, whose loving, passionate tenderness became a thing for which I craved and yearned, have you yet forgotten the girlish pride and hastiness you saw that night? Tell me, is there any way by which a woman can make atonement for a girl's folly? If so, by a woman's love and wisdom I will wipe out my errors.

I got into the train—but not before one of the porters had recognised me—and, with the excitement of wounded pride, I forgot my fatigue, until, worn and wearied, I crept into my bedroom, to give way to mingled feelings of pride and dismay. Heavy-eyed, and literally worn out, I came down to breakfast, my escapade undiscovered, but its seed sown for a fruitful harvest of either sweet or bitter memories.

The same afternoon we had a visitor, a rarity for us. The result was that Chrissie promised to teach in the ragged-school; and not only this, but she promised to help to form a class by seeking out poor children and bringing them to the school. Thus we made our first friend in H——, and started upon a work which grew into a magnitude of which we never had dreamt. My dream of fame filled my life, but Chrissie did the noble things of which I only dreamt!

## CHAPTER XI.

## MOEY MAKES ME HER CONFIDANTE.

"Ah! who can tell how hard it is to climb

The steep where fame's proud temple shines afar."

BEATTIE.

AFTER the excitement of the preceding events, a calm fell upon my life; it was full of inward ambition and 7—2

constant mental soaring, while outwardly it remained exactly the same as the one which I had led before Mr. Haverill's visit. Stay! there was one thing new in it—I wrote! I purposely put this assertion in italics, for to me it comprised more than aught else.

True, I did this with but very little success; yet the encouragement I, at times, received made me persevere as though a nation waited breathless and expectant for the fruit of my pen. I will tell you the whole truth. I did so want to be a second George Eliot! She was not then so famous as now, and yet, oh, how I envied her-not for her monetary success, but for the fame which was dawning upon her horizon. I used to think that death would not hurt me if just for once I could so speak to the hearts of my fellow-creatures, touch their feelings to the issue of my own, and make them feel that humanity is after all the grand touchstone of true nobility!" "She is so grandly, purely, humanly, great," I used to assert, as I put down her works with scarcely repressed tears. "One could do without a God if humanity could gain a crown such as hers," I pleaded to myself when, in a state of superhuman exaltation, I perused the pages upon which her grandest thoughts were burning; "Truly to write is to live."

I worked hard. Looking back, I know this as a certainty; but, perhaps, after all, it was not in the right way. Moreover, strange ideas took possession of me. I began to wonder if I knew enough of human character to write of it as it should be written of; if I were competent to analyse the beatings and throbbings of the great pulse which stirred the very centre of our world, the grand key of its motive power—the human heart. My friends, can you not see where I failed? I, a frail, weak, girl, imagined that with my poor feeble powers I could gauge the intensity of anguish and desolation of which only the noblest hearts can ever reach the depths; fancying that to me

had been revealed its keenest joys as well as its pangs of bereavement.

While I was thus working hard with my pen, Chrissie was living more to purpose than I had ever done. She had found a class for herself; such a one as I shall never forget—little shock heads, dirty faces, and still dirtier hands. Yet behind all this she knew more existed, and she possessed the power to find out and educate their little souls.

"I am to have the infants' class-room," she said, as she introduced me to three forms full of these little street Arabs. "After next Sunday I shall be able to

make some arrangement conducive to order."

I believe I uttered an involuntary expression of disgust as I saw the specimens of the street scum which she had cajoled and coaxed into a sitting posture upon the straight forms of the H—— School.

"I wonder you have patience to touch or speak to them," I whispered, as I saw their flushed, dirty, faces upraised to hers in an agony of surprise and wonderment, which in more favoured children, we should call pretty bashfulness or nervousness, but which in these outcasts we term "ill-breeding" and "disgustingness."

"Do not speak like that, Maggie; they are God's little ones as are the children born in happier homes. I mean to search for, and get at, the inherent love of their little hearts, and by this very affection educate them into something worthy of being both spoken to,

and touched."

I am afraid I sneered. We were looking at the work from such different standpoints, seeing it in such vastly-removed lights. She with the full shining of eternity glancing in unconcealed brightness upon her work; I, with very mortal and limited sight, looking upon it as it was in the abstract, with no Gospel teachings glinting over its dirt and darkness. I saw dirty, ragged, children, with wistful, upturned, faces

certainly, yet whose clothes seemed the very homes for "creeping things," and whose bare feet moved me rather to disgust than pity. She saw children whom the child-Christ had not only redeemed, but loved. "These are mine," was her watchword, as she came out from the world to collect for her Saviour the souls He had ransomed. Never minding the dirt and obscurity from which she rescued these little lives, she tended their growth with an anxiety comparable only to a devoted mother's love.

She was also peculiarly fitted for her work, for there was in her a wonderful share of motherly instinct and soothing; the most restless child gave way to her firm sweetness, while she ever refrained from checking the sunniness of child-life which occasionally threw its gladness over their otherwise sombre existence. used to say, when we afterwards worked together, "I think I feel sometimes as if I were an universal mother to all children; I feel as if I should like to have a lap large enough to hold them all so that I could pet and comfort them to my heart's content. am sensible that life's lessons are very hard, that it is dreadful for the little ones not to have 'good times' before the real study of school time comes on." eyes used to grow luminous when she talked of these children whom I once so despised, and I gropingly wondered what spell of enchantment they managed to throw over her, to induce such love as hers to spend its wealth upon them.

Moey helped her, petted the children, and crowned Chrissie's efforts for their well being, and better clothing, by endless stitches and much earnest exhortation, concerning the care they ought to take of their temporal things—i.e., their new coats and little trousers, cut and contrived out of Philip's old ones until a keen eye would have been requisite to have found out the lack of newness in its texture. She also visited them in their homes, and this not to patronise but to cheer

their parents, to clasp hands in sympathy, to pat the little shock heads until the mouths puckered themselves into all sorts of smiles over teacher's notice. Both Chrissie and Moey possessed the rare art of visiting the poor. I speak advisedly when I call it a rare art, for of the hundreds and thousands who enter the dwellings of the poor I dare assert that nine-tenths of them do more harm than good. Poverty makes itself felt enough in its pinchings and contrivings, in its deprivations and labour, without the added insult of "silks and satins" commenting upon and lecturing its shortcomings. Indiscriminate almsgiving and unjust censure are two of the greatest evils amongst district visitors; therefore it is cause for little wonder that so much good is lost to the world through it. Chrissie and Moey soon found out and grappled with this evil; they touched the secret of successful visiting at its very core when they resolved to have nothing to do with either of these channels of heartburnings and dislike.

The poor of H—— were mostly lacemakers, so sundry purchases of their wares—at the cost much self-denial upon the part of the purchasershelped, while it did not pauperise, the workers. Again, great consideration was shown towards them in the way they were visited. No lofty airs of condescension made them feel the difference 'twixt the station of the visited and the visitors, and I hold that this is the thing which requires most tact in successful intercourse between the poor and the rich. To you Sunday-school teachers, who complain of the manner in which your visitations are received in the homes of your scholars, I commend two rules—never see anything which you are not wanted to see, and never feel that you are better than the people you visit! You will say we cannot help seeing. I grant you this; but you can help showing that these powers of vision are yours. I speak from experience when I say that

this is possible. I have visited my scholars in homes so dirty, that I have almost sickened upon entering them, but I have never appeared to notice, even while a process of mental inventory was going on in my mind, so clearly that each article in the room was afterwards remembered. I have chatted with its inmates, pleasantly and cheerfully, taken an interest in the fact that Joe had a threepenny "rise" last week, or "Maggie came home from service with a bad thumb," made them feel that their welfare was my pleasure, and then promised to come again soon, naming no time or day, and almost inevitably the result has been the same,—the next call has found a tidier room and a heartier welcome. "Bone of our bone, flesh of our flesh," is, after all, the motto which should impregnate every fibre of our being where we engage in such work as this; then, methinks, the harvest would be greater, and the ingathering more worthy of our King and Redeemer.

It was not the day of School Boards then, so Chrissie planned, and eventually accomplished, a scheme for the secular education of these poor little ones. Before this was carried out, we had grand times over the furnishing of a little home for ourselves. Sewing was such a novelty to us that we carried it through with a vigour which an everyday seamstress would have lacked. Oh, how we stitched, and what ideas of happiness we put into the long seams and hems, as we prepared for our new home! we were fairly ready for its occupation, how we turned and twisted the furniture into every conceivable position so as to make the best of it! We were still young enough to enjoy our new style of housekeeping, and, although, I am bound to own we were more like children playing at it than aught else, we contrived to be pretty successful in our first efforts. We cooked, we ironed, we dusted, with a determined energy unmistakable—in fact, we did all the housework ourselves, excepting the menial part of it, until we really

were qualified for positions as lady-helps.

Moey would have exempted me from these duties. on the score of my literary work, but I would hear none of her reasonings, arguing—as I still argue that literary work never unfits a woman for domestic It may debar her from the pleasure of them, when her pen is always in her hand, but certainly never can disqualify her in this particular. I had not reached the point of fame when untiring work is demanded to keep up the due amount of "copy," so I sewed as gaily as did Chrissie and Moey, because the work was being done for home! We were suiting our tastes to our circumstances, yet when Mr. Haverhill made us a present of a beautiful-toned piano, I went up into my bedroom and burst into a fit of passionate weeping over it, as if a dear living friend had returned I speak reverently when I say that God, and to me. God only, knows the exultant passion of feeling with which I first touched its keys. My heart had hungered for this companion as only hearts can hunger that love music almost as they love life. It seemed too good to be true, as the sweet strains came forth from its muteness, while Chrissie sat with me, to play over one of Handel's grand preludes, and my heart beat over its possession as many a girl's has hardly done over that of a lover. For days my work was neglected; I was like a famished, fainting soul, who happens upon a fountain of fresh water, and could never have enough of it: it bubbled its sweetness into every hour of my life until I grew used to it again. Yet I shall never forget the first night after we received it! I believe I was childish enough to kiss the senseless wood, so great a boon did it seem! Then I mourned over my previous loneliness, arguing that naught but the lack of money had deprived us of this never-failing source of pleasure. "Fame will bring money," I confidently asserted to myself, as I saw our immediate family again possessors of the Hollow; picturing our returning to it, then finally closing the airy castles with resolute hand in order that I might build a like one for an imaginary heroine. Sometimes I had "happy times" over my work, moments when I threw my whole soul into it, and lived my hero's or heroine's life as completely as if it had been my own; but these times were rare; usually I plodded on faithful to the

call of fame while dead to all other feelings.

"Philip shall know the value of the thing he scorned," I told myself over and over again; "when the world has stamped its approval upon me and my work, he will see that others rate highly the love of which he was so doubtful!" Truer, softer, feelings mingled with these harsh, unwomanly, ones, for my ideas of life's earnestness were not wholly lost in the dream of fame. How could they be while Chrissie's wonderful beauty of character ever shone so close by the shadowy vagueness of my own? I dreamt of working for Moey, of earning a large sum of money for the copyright of a carefully-written book; then, like a beneficent godmother, blessing both Philip and my little sis with the cheque; while I told them "to marry and be happy ever after," as the heroines of the olden-time novels always did.

Even this satisfaction was denied me—for ere we had been settled comfortably in our new home for the course of a single week, Moey told me of a fresh change

to take place in our household arrangements.

She told it in the following diction, and made the disclosure or assertion upon one of those peaceful nights which peep into our lives as something almost too good for earth. "I am going to take care of Philip, after August."

I answered sharply, as if with a foreboding of evil, "After August indeed! I think you take care enough of him now; he thrives well upon it, at any rate."

"Does he?" she queried. "I fancied him thinner

and paler. He says he needs some one to take greater care of him."

"Then he is unreasonable," was the quick retort. "I suppose there is a matron or somebody at the theological institution—(I would not speak of it by its correct term, college)—to see that his things are properly aired and his bed in a proper condition—is

there not?"

"I suppose so," came the answer. The action which followed I can compare to nothing else than a mental shaking of herself together, for first she shrugged her shoulders in a peculiarly nervous manner, then literally drew herself compactly and closely up, as weak women often do when they have to bear for others as well as themselves. She went on: "Yet for a man there is nothing like a real home, a place where one woman ever waits for, ever loves and studies him; and this is what I mean to do for Philip."

"Why don't you say at once that you are going to be married?" I fiercely asked. "Are you ashamed of

your lover, or what? When is it to be?"

Her womanly spirit asserted itself. "Have I cause to be ashamed? Never! It will be two months hence." Her voice grew even more tender as she finished her sentence, for when I speak of womanly assertion I speak only of the dominant, loving, power, and I would I had known it then as I know it now! Looking me full in the face—I see her pained gaze even after the lapse of years—she said, "Why do you speak to me so? You cannot understand that Philip's love is the crown of my life because you cannot understand affection! Maggie, if ever you love, you will comprehend what this great vast affection means to me."

I turned away from her, for my heart was full; but she mistook the impulse moving me, and therefore sorrowfully said, "I wish you could know the power of such love as mine; you will never comprehend me

till then."

Little Sis! Pale face with wistful eyes, I see you now, and I understand as I never understood then. Yes, there is a difference, for the barriers of pride are now broken down, and I would give the wealth of a world to see your sweet face once again. Too late! Yes, I know it. The angel on the White Horse closed the gate, and I was left outside. Oh, the bitterness!

# CHAPTER XII.

#### MOEY LEAVES US.

"How fair is thy love, my sister." Solomon's Song.

Once comfortably settled in our new home the preparations for Moey's wedding were quietly but steadily She seemed as if she could not realise what a difference it would make to us all, how surely she would drift away into another channel of life, one with her husband's aims and hopes instead of the existence with which she had previously identified herself.

Only experience could teach her the full meaning of the compact she was making when she left our home for another, promising "To have and to hold from this day forward, for better for worse, for richer for poorer, in sickness and in health, to love and to cherish, till death do us part." No living thing to come between, nothing to dare to interfere! Only one proviso for the termination of this vow, that "Till death do us part."

"Love is strong as death," spake the master voice, and we reiterate it crying, "Ay, even stronger," but the shadow of the latter ever comes over the brightness of the former. Yet why should I dwell on this side of

the picture?

How we worked during the intervening months putting in dainty stitches and very much invention of needlework to Moey's trousseau, until our successful labour made us almost as exultant as children when each garment was in turn neatly folded and put away. True, there were many drawbacks in the shape of unmet wants of a monetary kind, but by hard sewing we overcame these difficulties through the work of our fingers, and you can hardly imagine how a woman may if she so wills, make her attire that of a gentlewoman by dint of industry and care, at the same time ever preserving her own personality above all the shifts of her reduced circumstances. I am afraid I can never fully make you understand what a good tuition these months were to us, leaving no time for idle dreaming or restless impatience after a lost home and friends. When such came on, to find a loophole through which to creep, they came during the night time, and not in the day. Moey, Chrissie, and I did the housework, excepting the thoroughly menial portion of it; we also kept up our musical studies and our readings, so that each moment found some fresh task. All the housework done by me was performed under protest, as I had my literary labours in addition to sewing and other duties. Chrissie had her school and Moey her classes. Poor Moey, she lived like an Arcadian dreamer in a strange whirl of half-expectant pleasure and pain.

Who is it who writes of "Completed cadences" in

life? Are there any such?

By no means straitened in her love this sister of mine dreamt her dreams and lived her little day, but her affection was of so intense a nature that it almost sanctified her life; nay, why should I say almost? it did quite, until she lost herself out upon the infinite ocean of God's love, and being lost in Him she was found in heaven.

The events which transpired during the day upon which she first spoke of her marriage, and that upon

which it took place, were comparatively uneventful, and the last evening of her single life found her sitting in my bedroom, her head upon my shoulder, with white, nervous face, and a strange quivering of feeling

playing about her mouth.

I gave myself up to the sensitiveness of the moment. and taking the dear, dear, face from its resting-place, I held it tenderly between my hands, kissing it softly as something almost too pure to be touched. She looked so beautiful, that I ceased to wonder at Philip's love: then I wept bitterly as one who feels himself out at sea, and the distant waves bearing all he loves farther and farther from him. All the tender talks we had had together came back with vivid and startling remembrance; the memories of her sweet, consistent life came crowding up, until breaking down all barriers of reserve, I cried, "How can you leave us all?" Straining her to me in a passionate caress, I entreated her never to forget us, to love me always as I would ever love It is pitiful when the loneliness of her lot dawns upon a woman in such fearful power that she asks for love, even with her lips, but I was beginning to feel that all earthly love may slip away from us, leaving us drifting, drifting, ever drifting away from the golden hopes of our morning. She answered, "Do not make it harder for me, Maggie. Next to Philip I love you: but, my darling, how could I stay here when Philip wants me? Some day a wooer will come for you, and no old time vassal could have bowed before his courtly dame as you will stoop before the power of his call. Maggie, I wish I had long ago tried to break down the barrier of reserve which came between us during the last two years; but wishes are vain now; yet how I have loved you! Believe me, my darling, I shall ever, ever, love you thus." Then we tightened our clasp upon one another, and a tender silence fell upon us She saw happiness in the future, while I saw little but darkness and a prefigured despair. When I

speak thus I mean only as far as love goes; my dreams of fame were still in the ascendant, I yet dreamt of growing "great;" but I saw my life stretching before me as I had never seen it before, a lone and loveless one, such as all women instinctively dread. I am glad, with a great gladness, that I did not show this view to Moey; our hours together were growing so few that the phantom of my dreads was unneeded to darken Something in her face struck me with a keen anguish, for every vein stood out with a startling transparency, and she looked so shadowy that it seemed as if the softest breath of heaven were too rough to blow upon her. She fluttered and trembled like a caged bird, with nervous excitement, her colour coming and going until I thought that of all the fair women God had fashioned and dowered with a soul. she was the sweetest. So near the borderland it was little wonder that its spirit crept into her lovely face: it culminated to a beauty so rare that I could hardly take my eyes away from it. Somehow a presentiment of evil crossed my mind, while wildly and fiercely my heart rebelled against it. Then I quailed beneath the strength of my own feelings, and tried to put them from me, but could not! Instinctively as man's heart in seasons of trouble goes out to his Maker so did "O God!" I cried, "Not this! not this, anything, O anything but this!" Inwardly I kept up my cry, repeating it over and over again like a dirge, then with one heartbreaking outburst I put my arms around her as though defying Him to take her from us. All the worldly possessions we had lost seemed as nothing in comparison to this evil looming before my mental eyesight; then I chided myself for my forebodings, and tried to look cheerfully at the completeness of the life she would live when once she was Philip's wife. Certainly it would not be such as she had led at the old home, with its innocent gaieties, but it would be that which she had chosen even when she was surrounded by them.

Love had triumphed over social fictions, but then it was such love, and for so noble a man; it was no sentimental fancy of a romantic girl for a man's exterior, but the worship of a woman's heart for his grand virtues of character. I tried to speak pleasantly, and happily, of it, so I said, "To-morrow evening you will be a wife, and I know you will be happy, for you understand him, and are sure to meet his wishes."

Earnestly elasping her hands she asked, "Do you think I can be all to him that a wife should be? Now and again it seems to me as if such a thing were impossible; he is so grand, so noble, so great, that I cannot help wondering why he singled me out to be his wife."

Inwardly I smiled at her lover-like rhapsodies, but I merely said, thinking of the night of my birthday fête, "Well, and if he is? He thinks you all that, and more."

"Does he?" a great rapture came into her eyes; "I am so glad if he does, but he has such fits of moodiness and abstraction that sometimes I think he fancies he would have been able to do better if he were not encumbered with a wife."

Where I learnt my wisdom I do not know, for I then had little training of this sort, but woman-like I rose to the occasion, saying, "You should not judge Philip like that, my darling; men are so different from women in this particular; they do not live in feelings as we do, and they have, outwardly, less control over them. You must not expect too much from Philip. I

think much happiness is lost through this."

Neither have I ever changed my opinion upon this subject, for I have seen women who were pure, true, and affectionate, wreck married happiness by a constant fretting for the outward demonstration of love upon the part of their husbands. They have mourned and fumed over loss of tenderness and affection, when that evil has been totally non-existent; pining over a fancied deprivation until they have called into being the very

essence of the thing they have dreaded. Men object to be constantly worried by their wives, for whom they entertain the truest regard and noblest love, and I know no earthly thing so likely to shake the very foundations of these as a constant distrust of their actuality. Moey made no such shipwreck, because her great love was not concentrated upon self, and it is a fact that nothing makes a woman so constantly seek these expressions of regard like vanity. Do not mistake me; I do not mean to put forth the theory that only vain women crave for these evidences of mutual attachment: it is not so, but only those who are encumbered with excess of self-admiration pursue after them.

Moey made a very lovely bride, but her fair white face grew almost ashen, as the organ pealed out the Beati omnes after the ceremony. It was such a quiet wedding, no train of bridesmaids, no fuss of speeches and toasts, yet it was a red-letter day for us all; full to the brim of happiness for Moey, running over with self-communings for me. I was fain to confess Philip's choice was a wise one, even while I was trying to forget the tender memories of the past. He had won a wife who had learnt the doctrine of selfimmolation, and went forth with him to practise it. believe she was one of those women who would have lifted saintly faces at the stake, and died, without a murmur or a groan, for dear love's sake; following her religion and her loved through the mire as well as through its glory. The service was over, and with it passed away from my life all thought of Philip excepting as Moey's husband and my brother. I knew that any other love would be sinful now, and I rejoiced that this enemy to my peace was thoroughly conquered before the marriage took place.

After Moey's departure, a strange calm fell over our lives; it was like those quiet days that come, now and again, even upon the most troubled seas. I read and wrote still, with little, but some, success, while a new

pleasure came into our lives. Chrissie and I made friends with the organist of St. Matthew's Church, and he allowed us to use the organ whenever we There was mutual accommodation in this, wished. for several times, during seasons of sickness, on his part, we gave lessons to the pupils in his stead. While at other times, in moments of leisure, he would play for us until life became almost insupportable by reason of its ecstasy of joy. In these transitory hours I used to feel as if my soul or mind must break its barriers, and get rid of the flesh which so swiftly bore it to earth again. Our organist was no mean musician. have heard him play a symphony so harmoniously, with so skilful a touch, that it has been almost like standing at the gate of heaven, until, with the acuteness of sympathy, which most musical natures possess in a grand degree, he would feel with us, then put his perceptions into the enchanting notes he played, until, lost in the mazy delight of its ravishment, we forgot the lower world to which its cessation brought us. This was a bright ray of light glancing in upon the dusky shades of the Erebus which the village of H—— seemed to us, and we fully appreciated it. Chrissie entered into it even more fully than I. used to add her rich, rare, voice to the mellow notes of the organ with an expression as devotional as musical.

I remember saying to her, "You forget us when you

sing?"

"Yes," she answered, "sometimes I forget every-

thing; I feel as if I were singing to God."

She had been hymning the words with which I have since, so often, comforted myself:—

"Well I know thy trouble,
Oh, My servant true,
Thou art very weary,
I was weary too.
But that toil shall make thee
Some day all My own,
And the end of sorrow
Shall be near My throne."

I turned to her with a gesture of earnest inquiry, "Do you believe all that, Chrissie? Do you think the end of all weariness and sorrow will be near His throne?"

The shadows of nightfall were fast creeping over the church, while, softly, like a caress, the sun stole in through the windows, lighting up the aisle, nave, and transept, with a soft ravishment of beauty. The last cadence of her song had died away into uncertainty, and its quivering echo alone lingered, like a spell, upon the intense quietude of the hour, as I pursued my questioning with unwonted yearnings. "Do you believe the end of these cheerless gropings, these broken links of life, these everlasting battles with self, will bring us at last to God—and our loved?" Ah, me! I am afraid that I still wanted my father more than I wanted the rapturous sweetness of seeing him again. But Chrissie was no false teacher: she gave me no idea of a heaven gained without a heaven "Not any of these, dear, unless they are borne for Him; the weariness of earth is meant to send us to Him; to me it is the voice of Jesus calling upon us, in His transcendent pity; but we first have to learn to bear them cheerfully and patiently because He has imposed them."

"I want rest for myself," I moaned; "I cannot everlastingly fight this battle, and yet I cannot, cannot, love God."

"Why not? See how He loves you?" said she.

"Does He? Then why did He take all joy-giving rays out of my life? Why did He take papa away just when I wanted him most? Why has He left me alone to this grey existence? All so ruthlessly torn away, and yet you tell me God is good?" I cried; my bitterness of soul at last gaining expression from my lips. "If I could go to God without loving Him, I would, because papa is there, and I cannot bear the thought of being shut out from him; but you say there is no other way?" I concluded mournfully.

"You must not think I speak harshly, Maggie," was her answer; "but I do think you are wilfully rebellious against God, and that is the worst rebellion of all. You imagine He has been cruel and unkind to you because He has given to your dearest one the matchless glory of another home, the myriad joys of heaven for the fleeting ones of earth; the angel's tearless eves for his earth-sorrowing ones, the delicious Eden-like tranquillity of heaven's peace after this world's tossing. You imagine that you loved your father more than God loved him, but selfishness is really at the root of this feeling. You ought to rejoice that he is so happy, not mourn through thinking only of yourself. I wish I could teach you to say, 'Thank God for all our losses as well as for all our gains.' You in reality know nothing of earth's great burden of suffering; it groans with an anguish greater than any of which you at present conceive, yet you call yours hopeless, while braver women would bear it without a In this village there are such; worn with want, and passive with so great a misery, that they are almost glad to see their best-beloved escape, early, from the possibility of suffering as great as that through which they have had themselves to pass. Hopelessly poor, they yet ever struggle, hand to hand, against the wolf at the door, and 'thank God' heartily when the last day in the week has not found them breadless; yet they never hint of hating God. Some of them know this trouble, in spite of the most prudent carefulness and self-denying industry, yet they rarely murmur at the hardness of their lot." Then, noticing my astonished look at being thus lectured, she still pitied my wistful hunger for the thing which she possessed, and out of the treasured brightness of her own grief-stricken heart she brought words of comfort so sweet and tender that I dare not repeat them here.

My pure, noble friend! She stirred in me a feeling that I must help to relieve the misery and care around me. Before we left the church my promise was given that I, too, would aid her in her work amongst the destitute children, even as Moey had done. "It will lighten your own burden to see how others bear theirs, and by entering into, and sympathising with, actual distress, you will prove for your own satisfaction that the circumstances of bereavement which are now yours are not one-half so hopeless and tangible as the sufferings and sorrows of these fellow-creatures of yours." She had concluded as we went together up the "people's" aisle of the church. Her hand was upon the door, and when she was about to open it, I, upon the impulse of the moment, said, "Kiss me, Chrissie, as a seal to the compact that henceforth we we will try to work together."

Solemnly, as if registering a vow, we shook hands over the resolve made, and I knew that Chrissie, the girl whom I had hated, was more to me than any one

else in the world, excepting Moey.

Parallel with this knowledge ran the thought, I shall have to teach the "street Arabs;" more than this I shall have to clothe them, touch them, and—who knows?—perhaps love them.

# CHAPTER XIII.

#### THE FIRST OF THE SCHOOL.

"Ragged children, with bare feet,
Whom the angels in white raiment
Know the names, to repeat
When they come on you for payment.

"Patient children—think what pain
Makes a young child patient—ponder!
Wronged too commonly to strain
After right, or wish, or wonder."

E. B. Browning.

An adequate conception of my first day at Sunday-school, or rather the ragged-school, it is almost impossible to convey to any one who has known nothing of this great work. I took Chrissie's class while she went out on another recruiting expedition, in order that I might be supplied with a class of my own. To me, it is one of the unfathomable mysteries of God's Providence why to such children should have been given the breath of life; yet I dare trust that the future revealings will leave no doubts, when once God has taken us into the land where we shall not see darkly, as through a glass.

How can we boast of our charter of freedom while these little ones sit down enslaved in the perpetual darkness of want and crime? In that room there were children so haggard, worn, and pinched, that a life-time of agony seemed engraved upon their wee features. Old foreheads, so wrinkled that ages of wrongs looked as if they had blotted out for ever youth and its pleasure. Then there were saucy rebels, who turned the school into a sort of pandemonium for the first few days of their appearance in it, after which

they comparatively settled down, until they could safely cause another outbreak of their shrill trebles. Children who needed taking into the very heart of women's love and pity, yet ofttimes knew no other use to which a mother could be put, excepting scolding or cursing purposes. No mean work was this in which Chrissie was engaging; no mimic warfare she was fighting; but the great, grand, battle of love against hate, freedom against oppression, and, above all, God's love against Satan's luring wiles. Sometimes, after intense discouragement, I used to say, "These children have no spark of goodness in them, and the mothers are worse than the little ones; it is no use trying to befriend them; they are so obstinate and stubborn, always thinking their own way the best, no matter how patent it is that it is not so."

"My dear Maggie, look at the heat and burden of the day which they have borne; it makes them petulant and hard. They think—not so foolishly—that you know so little of their privations and misery. Amid the dark records of their common lives you have no place, because you have been kept aloof from its bitterest experiences. Let them once trust you thoroughly, as they did Moey, and your influence will be certain." I proved her words true, and as I worked with a will, my heart began to move towards my scholars as well as the parents. I commenced feeling as if they were beings whom I could rescue, souls whom I could succour. My humanity was roused, thus my experience grew wider. If I lost much during these months, I also gained much; if my dignity was put on one side, I still had a greater accession of honour when I knew that these waifs and strays were happier and better for my coming. Our organist also joined us in our labours, and ere long we had planned classes in a manner as effective and useful as it was methodical.

Work begun by one solitary human being is rarely

carried to its close without the intervention and help of others, We found it so. Girls came to our aid who grew as earnest over the work as Chrissie herself; but perhaps of all our helpers Gerrard Power was our

greatest aide-de-camp.

He brought all sorts of pleasures into the school, teaching the children by the system now so widely known as the Kinder-garten. Like ourselves, he had been reduced from comparative plenty to poverty, and eked out his income by taking the post of organist at the H—— Church. There was a strange romance in his life, which had rendered him reserved and quiet, until he began to thaw under Chrissie's influence. had known Alex da Costa at college, also Philip, so it was little wonder that we listened with unabated interest to his stories of college life. Our old memories were becoming the only links we had to the past years. A strong friendship ensued between us; and as the love of his life bore its fruit in after years, leaving its trace also upon the annals of mine, I will transcribe it exactly as he gave it to me. Oh, this old, old, story of useless love! A long, half-sentimental, talk, led to the telling of this chapter of life's history, and a confidential intercourse made its revelation simply the mutually-held secret of two hearts, instead of its knowledge being confined to one. We had been arguing concerning a case, which occurred in the village, of a young man who had loved a girl, and being, as he thought, by reason of his poverty an unfit match for her, he had left home and friends to seek the means of gaining a sustenance worthy of her. succeeded in his endeavours, but returned to find her married to another, whom she had never loved as the former one. He having gone away without disclosing his preference for her, she, out of pique, had supplied his place with a more outspoken suitor.

He pitied the man; I blamed him, arguing that he ought to have spoken of his love before going in search

of his fortunes, saying that it was more than likely she would have married him in his former position. For answer, he put a leading question to me: "Do you think a man ought to speak of his love to a woman when he knows he can never keep her in her own state of life?"

"Most emphatically, yes," I answered, for I had not then been drilled to the knowledge of worldly points of so-called honour as now.

"I think not. I will tell you why, if you will listen patiently to my story," he continued. "I have vowed, over and over again, I will never marry! There is but one woman in all the world for me. Do you think I would drag her bright, winsome, bonnie, beauty through the hard shifts of poverty and sorrow, until it grew pale, wistful, and cold, as are the faces of some women I know? Never! if I must fight hand to hand with that curse of a man's life 'appearances,' she shall not know the bitterness of the struggle. Thank heaven! I love her too well for that; yet once I was on the eve of pouring forth the whole torrent of my wild, hopeless love! Good God! if I had, what remorse I should have suffered after! I, Gerrard Power, dare to love a girl who is a lady! 'Where is the harm?' I question, fiercely, when my love is surging through every fibre of my being. 'Am I not a gentleman?' When cooler moments come, I argue more rationally; for, with all the domination of patrician blood in my veins, I can reduce my pride to a very small modicum by recalling the fact that I am only a Government clerk, on the infinitesimally small salary of two hundred pounds a-year. This modicum of the English currency is the whole, and sole, means of my support; and, with the tastes and pursuits of a gentleman, leaves me no margin for marrying. After telling you this, you will at once understand why I know it to be madness to declare my love. my dreams of its consummation at some future day;

but these are visions only, in which I see a girl-wife meeting me after my toil, and sweetening my whole life with her wealth of love; however I soon awake from them, to find a cheerless hearth, and a solitary one also. I rarely make moan over the petty troubles of my life, because I believe the surest way to contentment is to keep one's own counsel concerning the daily trivial battles each must fight; nevertheless, I, at times, get desponding of my future, and hate my present career. One of the greatest alleviations of my lot is work, both in the office and out of it. Then the school occupies a great portion of my thoughts. When I see the misery and want of its inmates, the poverty of their homes, I realise that there are harder lines in life even than mine."

"I am so sorry for you," I said; "I know a little of this despondence and work, also a little of the trouble which comes into life. I used to think I was cognisant of all its bitterness. 'Behold, I take away from thee the desire of thine eyes,' seemed the embodiment of my experience." With precocious wisdom I added, "All lives have more or less of this pain in them."

"Do they? I have known many men, and women, too, who will not acknowledge that such is the case. Some day I will tell you the whole of my story."

That night I looked upon a scene which I shall never lose from my remembrance; it was one of the first incidents in my work, which fully opened up to me the power for good that might, or rather does, arise from singing the truths of the Gospel into little hearts, as well as into large ones.

When we reached home Aunt Isobel met us with the words, "Such a dirty, untidy child has been in search of you, Maggie; she says her little brother is in your class, that he is ill, and always wanting the 'lady.'"

"Did she say who she was?" I inquired.

"No; but she said she lived down the third alley in B——Road; the first house on the left-hand side."

"It's Jimmy Haines," I exclaimed. "He is the brightest boy in the whole class. I must go to him."

"It is too late to-night," Aunt Isobel protested; but I was firm in my resolution to go to the sick child, so I started off on my expedition. I knew the court well; its entrance was from one of the best roads in H——. Over rough stones and ill-paved ground, it stood in unbroken dirt and confusion, a very example of

the demoralising powers of filth and poverty.

Groping my way through the darkness, I reached the house, and rapped at the door. No one answered. Softly lifting the latch I opened it, and stood upon the threshold to listen. No sound reached me, excepting the tick of an old-fashioned clock, which seemed at my very elbow. My eyes getting accustomed to the semidarkness, I soon discerned the outlines of the room; saw its black grate made denser in its blackness by one or two embers burning in it, yet heard no human My fancy grew excited. I pictured the child lying dead upon the settle in the corner, until I almost feared to advance a step further. Then a low murmur came to my ears, as if some one were speaking. I listened intently, until I made its meaning out. It was the low sobbing of a woman's voice. My fears died away. I crept nearer to the staircase, regardless of the quondam fearful settle, and with ears still strained to extraordinary tension heard the words, "She's not acoming." Advancing still farther, I saw a dim light overhead, and in less than a moment had reached the top of the rickety stairs. The inmates of the place seemed to take my appearance as a matter of little moment, after the first eager look; they evidently did not imagine me to be the person of whom their child had been speaking. I looked at the little face lying on some dark substance, which certainly was not a pillow, then said, "Jimmy." The eyes instantly unclosed, the white grew into the palest flush upon his little sunken countenance, while he feebly tried to

put his hand in mine. I saw at a glance what was coming. He would soon be one of the angels who do always behold the face of the Father.

"Sing!" he gasped; "sing, lady, sing!"

My heart seemed bursting. How could I sing at such a moment? The mother moved aside for me to take her place. "Sing!" still entreated the feeble voice. To this day I do not know the impulse which prompted me, for I had not sung it since the days of my own childhood. Saying to myself, "This is the last he will hear, until he sings in heaven," I began that sweet old hymn, in which earth's toilers often hear a mother's or a father's voice, "Around the throne of God in heaven." The echo of my own heart seemed to ring through the air as I began it. "Thousands of children stand," sang I, knowing that ere long another would have passed into the happy throng. It was ended, and God spoke in that dirty chamber, spake through the voice of a little child. took him into my lap, forgetting the words I had once used concerning such strays, and listened to the panting little voice, "What is glory?" I waited a moment before I answered him, then understanding the vocabulary of this child of the streets, I answered, "Having jolly good times through Jesus Christ."

"That's He what died, ain't it? I likes 'glory.' Sing it again, please." So the chorus rang out full and clear, "Singing, glory, glory, glory," while the panting, labouring, little form nestled closer into my

arms.

The thought came into my mind, "He will go from my earth-wearied ones to the spotless ones of the Saviour." So thinking, I held him reverently as well as tenderly. A pleased expression came over the old, worn face of the little one, as if his mind were dwelling pleasantly upon the hymn. I thought he was fast dying, but again the feeble, quavering voice asked, half wanderingly, "Does 'glory' have things to eat?"

- "Yes; and ever such nice stuff," I answered, my voice scarcely under control.
  - "Lots and lots."

"Yes, darling."

"Does He sell bloaters?" This was the child's employment.

"No, dear."

"Can I eat them with 'glory'?"

"Yes, if you like."

"Then sing 'glory 'again."

Do not say I was deluding the child. He was to be satisfied, as are all God's redeemed little ones; and if to him satisfaction meant this, how was I to disturb his dying moments by telling him that higher satisfaction would be given, so that the past would be forgotten, until he had no desire for any of its links? Did not the child-Christ say, "Except ye become as a little child"? Did He not also say, "Of such is the kingdom of heaven," when He took from the crowd a little child of whom the Scriptures doth not say, "He was clean and of goodly parentage"?

"I likes 'glory.' I knows He's Jesus Christ," said the child, as he put his wan, worn, feverish, hand in

mine. "I loves glory."

Do you think I ever forget the words of the dying

waif, "Glory is Jesus Christ"?

He was not yet satisfied, for another petition was proffered. "Now, the Sunday-school hymn, please."

I had practised teaching them to repeat after me some hymn, until it should be fixed in their memory. The one we were learning, then, was, "I am a little soldier."

"Don't try to say it after me, Jimmy, it will make you tired," I said, as I bent over to kiss him. So I went on with the lines until I came to the ones—

" I want to live with Jesus, The Bible says I may."

"Jesus is 'glory,'" faintly whispered the little

voice, and the finy fingers closed tightly over mine, then gradually loosened their hold, for the angels gathered around to put their arms about him and bear him over the Jordan. The worn, haggard, peaked, look relaxed its dominion over the waxenlooking face, while a sweet, placid grace stole over the, now, childlike beauty of his countenance. It seemed as if death had restored to him his childhood, causing him no longer to "Stand without in his bewildering."

I stood watching his sweet face while the words kept singing themselves up and down in my heart, "'Glory' is Jesus Christ." Was this so? Were my dreams of fame, after all, far removed from real glory and greatness? Was the voice of the Saviour still heard coming down to the lower world, and saying,

"A little child shall lead them"?

"O ye children, little did ye think that the teacher was yet to be taught by the childish faith and simple trust!" Tangled masses of hair sweeping that vile substitute for a pillow, tiny white face so mute and still, little hands exempted for ever from earth's toil—little did the ransomed soul conceive, until it glanced in upon heaven's brightness, how your words would ever ring themselves through my most earnest hours, reiterating them ever and anon, "Glory is Jesus Christ!"

## CHAPTER XIV.

### A LIFE BEGUN AND A LIFE ENDED.

"Life never seems so clear and easy as when the heart is beating faster at the sight of some generous self-risking deed. We feel no doubt then what is the highest prize the soul can win; we almost believe in our own power to attain it."—George Eliot.

"Two locks—and they are wondrous fair—`
Left me that vision mild;
The brown is from the mother's hair,
The blonde is from the child."

LONGFELLOW.

I LOOKED again upon that poor little face when it was lying in coffined stillness, with all the old tangled masses of hair, brushed smooth and beautiful, falling over the pillow in strange luxuriance.

Looking at him, I little thought that his was but the first of many such that I should see. I am not going to mourn over the incidents of the following weeks, they were all swallowed up in the great after sorrow. Even if such had not been the case, methinks there was little cause for lamentation.

Fever raged, little ones died by scores, Chrissie and I going in and out amongst them, until I longed, with strange, unutterable yearning, for the power to grow like her in her grand spirit of self-sacrifice. She never seemed to weary or despond, always carrying with her a sweet, cheerful, face, until gladness and comfort almost blossomed in her path. I learnt then the intensity of passion with which she loved these children; dying or dead, she claimed them as her own.

I believe her constant prayer would find an echo in the words—

"God of the universe, hear me! Thou Fountain of love everlasting;
Hark to the voice of Thy servant; I send up my prayer to Thy
heaven!

Let me hereafter not miss at Thy throne one spirit of all these Whom Thou hast given me here! I have loved them all like a

May they bear witness for me that I taught them the way of salvation,

Faithful so far as I knew of Thy Word; again may they know me, Fall on their teacher's breast, and before Thy face may I place them."

Ah! I believe when her warm heart had ceased to beat, when she is climbing heaven's golden stair, many a child's hand will stretch itself out to her. I used to think that I never saw such superhuman power of comforting as that possessed by Chrissie; the least touch of her hand seemed a consolation, untold, to the bereaved; and in the exceptions where they were "case hardened" by reason of their bitter poverty and privations, she put her magician's hand upon the tenderest chord in their hearts to open them to the strongest feelings of humanity. She took their weaknesses and sorrows to the great Absolver, until they came away softened and healed. I felt the grandness of her character, but could not emulate it, inasmuch as I did not comprehend what it was to really wear the lowliest garb of a true soldier of the Cross! When these poor women used to say to me "God bless you, You've been a good friend to us!" alien motives would creep in, and for a moment I felt myself unworthy of a place by Chrissie's side; I could not fail to notice that the wan, worn, faces of the women turned themselves instinctively to hers with a wistfulness of understood anguish such as they never turned towards me.

Oh, the little limbs that we straightened when "Love's twin brother" called for them to stand "'fore

the face of their Father;" the kisses we left upon "fading lips;" the little souls we watched pluming their pinions for the land in which they would speak the language of angels. It is worth a life-time's sorrow to have tender, holy, remembrances such as these. True life interpreted means naught but large experience and storing of wisdom; to me it seems there is no surer way of doing this than in living to others rather than ourselves. This was the path we both had taken, Chrissie as a volunteer, I as a pressman. Yet to both the results were good.

"Why does God send so much misery into the world?" I used to cry; in my selfish egotism imagining that I could have framed a brighter, happier world! Could I? Yes; just as a lazy teacher might omit to enforce discipline, thereby giving more noise and mirth to her scholars, leaving them to pay its cost, to the uttermost farthing, when the payment would mean bitterness and despair! Vanished for ever are those thoughts now, for the wrestling against fate is over, and my tempest-shattered bark has found its haven.

"You work for God, I for humanity," I used to argue with Chrissie.

"Nay; God must influence you."

"If I cared nothing about Him, did not believe in His existence, I should yet reach out my hand to help this people," I urged. "My human instincts and sympathies are aroused, I cannot help myself. Suffering humanity must ever appeal to one's own nature!"

"God puts the higher instincts there, or the appeal would be in vain."

"I doubt it! My own power of suffering would

prove my greatest prompter."

"Never, Maggie. It would not move you to such issues. You must be learning to love God when you love your neighbours. Don't you know 'He prayeth

best who loveth best;' and I feel sure our Father is teaching you in a way you know not. He will yet gather you right into the arms of His love, leaving no room for any doubts, fears, or useless arguings. Do you not see, love, how He is calling and wooing you through all the voices of His little ones who are passing to the 'many mansions'?"

"I try to, but I cannot, trust Him," I answered, then closed the conversation with a hurried reference to another subject; but the child-voice never left me—"Glory is Jesus Christ" floated hazily, but surely,

in my mind.

In more senses than one life grew very earnest; the most strenuous efforts to keep our domestic economy well in hand still found us unable to meet the meagre

expenditure of our household.

For the first time since our advent in H--- our income would not meet our outlay; we curtailed everything which it was possible for us to curtail, did our own washing, baking, dressmaking, &c., with industry indefatigable, yet with the same result—we were in debt! This was the greatest care that ever came upon us, the difficulty we found in paying our way. almost envied my father, sleeping so serenely in the shadow of the grey old kirk at home; I used to wish I could lie by his side, then in an impotence of sorrow cried. "Would I had never been born!" We mortals do exclaim in our pain, forgetful of the "Rest which remaineth!" If we could only have been born to the life we were leading instead of always having memories redolent of other days, we might have mastered its mysteries of pain with greater ease.

"I would write for dear life," I resolved, working early and late, never ceasing from my toil. I would send "copy" all over the literary kingdom, to ensure myself a place among the favoured "accepted," and would effectually bar the progress of the "wolf" by unremitting toil. My whole being was rising to the

emergency of the case. To me debt meant dishonour, unless it was, as in the old home, monthly or quarterly payments made for the sake of convenience. Oh, how I worked! giving myself no time for relaxation, excepting such as was afforded by the visiting of the sick. This, although it may not appear to have done so, afforded a wonderful break in my work. I saw for myself the fact that ours was not the hardest case in the world, that others suffered infinitely more than we In addition to this, the phases of life, seen, originated many a story for which, if but poorly, I was paid. My literary material grew upon my hands, but its incidents told upon me in the gathering as well as in the disclosing of them. I could not write without many tears and much mental wear. When I ended records of the "ingatherings" I had witnessed, my pen would travel slowly over the paper, while the hot tears gathered under my eyelids in a plenitude too pitiful to be restrained, until I was obliged to put my implements of work down in order that I might conquer the sobs which nearly choked me. I again lived over the dying moments, and witnessed each actor in them, realising, in a different fashion, the poet's idea of a "double life." I also learnt, to my own edification, the lesson Mr. Haverill had tried to inculcate namely, that literature is a profession never to be lightly undertaken. I found that earnest toil is often fruitless, for many were the "declined with thanks" over which I shed bitter, burning, tears, or else raised still more delusive hopes as I rewrote the outer pages—that an acquaintance with a publisher's office had not made cleaner—of the story upon which I had built such pecuniary castles, and consigned them, as I trusted, to the tenderer mercies of another editor.

One evening I was doing some of this recopying, when a telegram was brought to me by Chrissie. We stood looking at each other before I opened it, for messages of this description were rare with us then.

A heavy cloud seemed to roll itself over me as with trembling hand I broke away the envelope. "Come at once; Moey is ill," were the only words it contained. Two hours later I was on my way to her. When I reached the scene of Philip's labours, and her home, it was to find her rapidly recovering. The cloud vanished. "She will need great care," was the doctor's verdict, "yet all immediate danger has passed. Could not Miss da Costa stay with her?"

I agreed. Thus it came about that I was for several months domiciled with Philip and Moey, in the lovely little town of Werdon. My old love for Philip was slipping into the quiet, brotherly, love which makes provision for nothing more than mutual affection and respect; therefore I enjoyed my visit to that town as I

have enjoyed few things before or since.

True, Philip was only a Congregational minister, and held position as such; yet he was universally beloved and respected, while his church comprised men of wonderful stamina of character as well as education. Their wives, also, were ladies in the strictest sense of the word, and I mingled freely with them without even one involuntary thought concerning the fact that they were often the wives of tradesmen, and not of the aristocracy or gentry. They never offended the innate good taste of a gentlewoman, therefore I felt that Moey's lines had fallen in "pleasant places."

Then the town itself was a seaport one, with its everchanging, glorious, old sea, its rocks and its shingles, its mossy-grown terraces and wild, free-dashing, waves. With every breath I drew newness of life. I was free again! No straight, dusty roads, but the boundless expanse of God's beautiful waters, held in the "hollow of His hand," until they caught His glory, and danced the effulgence of heaven's light and beauty back to the very heart of man. I laughed and cried with joy. I had been so long shut off from its beauty, that it rippled its fretted waves at my feet, like an exquisite

living poem, too grand and great for my finite heart to compass. If I could only have put my thoughts into words, methinks the world would have paused to listen; but the great, dumb, anguish of inexpressible glory grew upon me, until my body fettered my spirit into actual pain. The things which lie round about the feet of men are exquisite living poems, but who shall find words in which to give them utterance? If I could have found a channel of sound or language into which I might have poured the rapture and the pain of this intensity of life, my literary success must have been ensured for ever; but often the voice of God speaks to the heart alone, while it refuses to touch the lips or the pen with the power of utterance.

The months sped away with their little systems of household duties, which I aided Moey to perform, until the last day, the last evening, of our calm serenity dawned! The sweet, rapturous pause in which we had listened to earth's grandest music came to an end! Never had I clung so fondly, or lovingly, to aught as I did to those fleeting months. They were like a bit of serene azure in an overcast sky, the brighter because

of the preceding and subsequent darkness.

I had taken in wonderful draughts of beauty from the loveliest nooks and corners of the fair country round about Werdon; watched the grey, mysterious, glory weirdly hovering over the mountains, upon which the sycamores and beeches lovingly intertwined their branches; seen the tremulous golden light playing between their grey stems, then descending, fall with ripples of radiance over the mossy undergrowth beneath. So looking, and so watching, I had woven for myself fairy-like dreams, in which I had forgotten the whole of my yearnings and strivings. To some souls adversity is God's choicest sunshine. They are like ferns, which know most rapid growth where there is naught but shade and dampness! I was one of these. So in His love He kept me in the perpetual background of sunshine withheld. Memories of pain, grief, and bitter disappointment seemed to flood my life until they fitted me for the adornment of my Father's work and home! Then came the utter calm!

One evening I took a long walk alone. Moey urged me to do so, because she knew my old predilection for unfettered pedestrianism. Even now I know of no better enjoyment than wandering off, alone, under the fair canopy of heaven, with the earth's freshest revelations of its mysteries spread on every side. I wandered on and on, over matted wreaths of loveliness so fair that it seemed almost a pity to tread upon such verdurous beauty. My heart grew glad with its beauty. I put away from me the memory of everything which could bruise or crush my soul, then gradually grew exultant, feeling like a young giant refreshed.

"God must be love," I cried, "or how could so much beauty emanate from Him?" Throwing myself into the long, cool grass, I sent up from the very depths of my heart a plea for power to search out the unfathomableness of His wisdom, in order that I might address myself to His work with all-conquering might.

Alas! alas! my resolves were soon forgotten; yet was He not at hand to lead me if I had asked Him? Ah! there is the sting of it! I loved Him for His

gifts, and hated Him for His withholdings.

When I entered the pleasant dwelling-place which Moey's fingers had helped to make so fair, a new thing awaited me. All that followed I cannot now recollect. My eyes were dim with a fresh pleasure, my arms trembling with excitement over the new happiness they held, for into them I had taken a little, tiny, soul, into which God had breathed the breath of life. Such a wee, little, rosebud that it seemed almost too fragile for the touch of mortal hands. My first niece! How I looked at her, loving her from the first with almost

a mother's tenderness and devotion! Her little life seemed to me a precious, inestimable, gift, while from that moment the mother-love in my heart grew until I realised to some extent Chrissie's patent "key" by which she entered the hearts of the little ones whose souls she ever sought to win.

You know the sequel? Yes; it is easy of reading.

"Then fell upon the house a sudden gloom,
A shadow on those features fair and thin;
And softly from that hushed and darkened room
Two angels issued where but one went in."

Keep back, ye tears! Ye blind me so that I cannot write! The angel on his "celestial embassy" left a comforter behind, yet the grief was very sore. In the passionate pulsations of my sorrow I owned this; yet what could recompense for the loss of the only sister I ever possessed!

Into the darkened room I went with the tiny blossom upon my arm, but the flower was fading into another phase of existence! Clothed in the fulness of youth and beauty, she was going from death into life! There was nothing terrible in this passing from one stage to another; it was so peaceful, so calm. Totally unlike my father's; it was disarmed of its terrors. She lay in Philip's arms with a childlike sweetness inexpressible. As I went up to the side of the bed and bent over her, with a surcharged heart, she turned the ineffable beauty of her face upon me in a rapturous gladness altogether past description.

"Is she not a beauty?" was her first feeble question.
"Yes; my love! oh, my love!" I answered. In a moment it dawned upon me that Philip had spoken no word of her approaching dissolution.

"You silly child; you are more agitated about it than I am," she faintly breathed. "Thank God! it is over."

So it was. The mother's life paid for the child's, but I could not tell her so.

Instead of this I said, "You must not talk, pet. I love her as my own child, but you must keep quiet."

"Not as your very own, Maggie! You cannot, cannot, love her as I do; but I will call her after you. I will call her ——" here her voice faltered, wavered, ceased.

"Philip," I cried, in an agony of entreaty, "she is dying;" but the man's love was greater than mine, for he almost stilled his heart-beats as he answered, in low tones of concentrated pain, "I know it, but cannot tell her so."

Rallying again, she went on: "She is Maggie; if I have a son he shall be Philip. Call her — "again a pause, then, "I've been so happy!"—and I was sisterless. God had taken her to the haven where she would most gladly have been but for the shelter of Philip's love. Into a land where she knew no deformity, for she awoke in His likeness, and was satisfied.

"Jesus is glory," whispered the angel, "who abideth," when I bent over the beauty which this earth would know no more. Then a current, resistless in its force, broke down all barriers of pride and reserve as I penned the words to Chrissie, "You, and the child, are all that remain to me," for I knew that my love for Philip, excepting as a brother, was dead for evermore. Henceforth he was Moey's husband, needing a comforter such as I could be, with an angel wife waiting for him. The longer I pondered over it the stronger grew the thought, "He is still Moey's, for she loved him; ever her husband, for true love knows no severing, no ending." Thus with Moey's death ended my dream of Philip's love, and, thank God! ended it for ever!

## CHAPTER XV.

## MOEY'S LEGACY.

"Memory when duly impregnated with ascertained facts is sometimes surprisingly fertile."

George Eliot.

MINE is to-day. I feel as if some hand had stretched out its long, lean, withered, fingers, like a peremptory ghost, and swept away from the intervening years their stultifying power! I see to-day the things I could not call to mind but yesterday; so again I am standing in that quaint, pretty, room, where the great reality stared me in the face—"Moey was not, for God had taken her." The subtle and varied phases of sensibility which those hours brought are, here, with me now as I write; they stand, like beckoning hands, luring me into their old power even against my will.

Sweep back, oh, tide of memory; beat thy cold, grey, waves upon other shores, for I have no answer to give to thy pitiless sternness excepting the cry, "Have mercy! mercy! mercy! ay, have mercy! be silent while I put forth my will to check thy impulses!"

The day after Moey's death, the sweet greensward was flushed with as tremulous a beauty as upon the day preceding it; the sun played in fantastic shadows over it without one gentle sigh of pity for the sweet womanhood which had been quenched. With wonderful caprice it actually stole in at the darkened window, and by invisible degrees made its way towards the mute, white, face lying in the upstairs room, then with fanciful devotion rested on the folded hands, as if there were naught else so graceful or so pure.

I watched it, thinking of her bright, beautiful life, her bonnie, winsome, sweetness; then looked down

upon her as she lay lulled in conscious security taking her last rest. And the bitter cry went up, "My God, is this the end of all? Do the happy always die, while we ever remain tossed with this unrest?" Disbelieving and disturbed, I thought of her previous martyrdom of spirit, when she imagined that none could ever love her, then of the powerful affection which released her, while, with a strange prescience of her present immunity from it all, I wrung my hands in woesome grief, as I went back to the old involuntary doubting of God's strange manner in taking compassion upon His creatures.

"Whom the gods love die young," came the old proverb with its trained and guarded falsehood, while I lacked the power to put it from me. I thought of all her pretty ways, her love and kindnesses, until I burst into the healthful tears which are far removed from the grief-stricken path that asks in vain for their relief. Death tries faith as naught else can do. vet. somehow, I think these fiery passages through which it travels also gets into firmer mould its foundations. A perplexing, new, light flashed upon my meditations as to God's dealings, and I was far from ready to receive it, excepting after a fashion both misconceived and misinterpreted!

Moey was buried at "The Hollow," in our old family vault; placed side by side with our darling father, while Philip and I were the only mourners. No pomp of stately pride, no long row of carriages, followed her to her quiet resting-place in the grey churchyard; but our hearts put on a funereal garb so dark that the pageantry of kings could not conceal woe

more sincere.

A stranger stood at a short distance from the grave -a stranger, yet a relative—for Alex da Costa was there.

I thought of my last visit to that spot, but no haughty pride now stirred my heart—death had left no room for this; instead of it I was bowed to the very earth with pain, caring little whether or no Alex made Philip acquainted with the fact of my midnight journey. My hidden life was consuming me, so that I cared little for aught else. It was the first time I had ever stood to hear those awe-fraught words, "Dust to dust, ashes to ashes," excepting in cases where the departed were not of kin.

You know the soreness, the aching desolation? Why should I dwell upon them? Moey had gone down to the dark portals with her crown of womanhood yet bright upon her brow. Why mourn? Was it not better that she should do this than live to drift through the darkness of its sorrows, its bereavements, and its deceptions, as too many women have to do?

Who can answer?

Sometimes I think she left behind, to me, the whole glory of her motherhood, for she left me her child. I never before knew what it was to have the depths of my heart stirred as they were by my bright, bonnie, winsome darling. My Maggie! my Moey's child! will you ever, ever understand how I loved you? I could not have believed it possible that I had so much of the, half-Divine, love of motherhood in me as my wee, pale, blossom awakened; but her little clinging fingers, her tiny helplessnesses, her feeble smiles called forth all the womanly compassion and affection of my being. It was like the revelation of an unexpected glory to me, and I revelled in it with a hungry intensity of passion such as ardent souls alone can know.

Philip urged me to remain in his home for the child's sake, so I agreed to stay for at least a few months longer. Chrissie's letters were frequent and long, keeping me well posted as to the behaviour and movements of my little ragged scholars, while I actually sent these—once so heartily despised, little ones—loving messages from "teacher." During my life with Philip there were few idle moments; daily

duties and multiplied cares occupied my time until I used to wonder how Moey had contrived to fit herself into such a corner of life. I found little time for writing, and the short spaces of it, which I filled with this employment, were not remunerative; my dreams of its goal were far less bright! Fiction had previously furnished me with the details of its work and reward, now stern reality faced the questioning, and to every inquiry gave out in unanswerable tones the one word, "Toil! toil! toil!" Ah, and although I toiled I failed, for to every author it is not given to scale the mount of success. Work? Yes, till the cheeks grow pale, till the eyes grow dim, till the drops of mental wear stand upon face and brow, till the hand trembles with the effects of the labour it has accomplished, the brain grows on fire, and the heart sick with its weight of life—yet fail! All this I have seen, have felt, known what it was to toil for mere bread, then sick with misery, half goaded to madness, receive the precious manuscript back again with the publisher's veto upon its fair pages, "Declined with thanks;" the thanks making its return none the less a tragic death-blow to the hopes built upon it.

The baby, Maggie, at this time took the place of my battle upon the field of authorship, for God had given into my care a beautiful. fair, tiny, book upon which to inscribe the motive power of a life-time. A young soul to train, to teach, to make all that it is desirable a woman should be. I grew humble before this little child, she seemed so spotless and so pure! It was not that she was better than other babies, for she was as full of childish petulances and wilfulnesses as other little ones; but as she grew older I used to learn many lessons of unquestioning faith and golden teachings of singleness of heart from my child-teacher! I think these little ones are like our better angels, God puts them in our pathway in order that He may save us from the utter blackness of despair, which would often

submerge our lives if we lacked the sweet beacons of child love.

Since Maggie's advent I have taken many a little one into these arms of mine; kissed many sweet, tremulous lips with my worn ones, until I can of a verity say they lead—often—into the stillest of pastures after the keenest of storms!

You ask me what of Maggie's father? I had ceased to love him! At least with a love which would have been sinful if my sister had still lived.

I had a quiet, sisterly, affection for him, very far removed from the waves of the old passion, and a compassionate, yearning, tenderness over him such as many women have for those who sorrow. Again, I was beginning to realise that around this boyish lover of mine I had thrown a halo of romance; clothed him largely with my ideality instead of his own characteristics. I was also finding out that girlish love is not always the best foundation upon which to build a lifetime's happiness; that Providence is kind in interposing its rod between such youthful opinions. Nor have I ever had cause to change my views upon this subject. From the depths of my heart I thank God that I did not marry my first love! I believe His "ares" are a thousand times better than the "mighthave-beens" over which we so constantly make moan! We see darkly through the veil, He sees naught intervening.

However this may be, I am certain of one fact, that He ordered my way aright in Philip's case. I thought of him now, with an infinitude of pity, such as no woman ought to feel for the man she calls husband; compassionating him after a fashion, such as we show to people weaker and less firm than ourselves.

I do not rightly recollect the first time upon which I discovered that he was learning to love me, for he surrounded me with a grave, frank solicitude, infinitely soothing to a woman of my calibre, so long as

it means everything short of love! We used to have long, frank, talks together—he owning how sorely he had misjudged my heart-power, I ignoring all but the one idea that now he knew me worthy of the sisterly relation I claimed towards him.

The months gradually passed away, until Maggie celebrated her first birthday, the anniversary of the month of her mother's death, yet all my movements towards returning to H—— had resulted in the fact that I was still Philip's housekeeper. Our prolonged chats were of more frequent occurrence, our intimacy fuller and deeper, so I was content to leave Chrissie and Aunt Isobel my share of the money which supported the little home, while I still remained with

Philip.

Oh, those pleasant summer evenings before the storm broke! the dreamy quiet of autumnal sunsets, the keen delights of our rowing expeditions, and the lazy floatings with the tide, in which we indulged after our hard, honest labour among the sick, poor, and wavering of Philip's congregation! The calm before the storm! It was so sweet, so still, like a pause in earth's warfare through which the angel's music drifts into our lives, leaving behind it a never-forgotten melody, and, mayhap, a never-forgotten remorse over its speedy departure. God-given, God-lent, yet, thanks be to His name, never given or lent in vain!

It came about in this way. One day Philip went to H--- unaccompanied by me, and when he returned he wore the old abstracted air of which Moey once made mention. With a sister's freedom I tried to coax him out of it, but in vain. Sitting out on the balcony where Philip, Moey, and I used to sit, together. we listened to the earth's mute breathings exactly as we had listened upon that far-off night when Philip had confessed his love for Moey. Somehow my thoughts went back to that evening, fraught with the womanly tenderness with which a woman always remembers her first love episode! I stole a glance at my companion, a furtive one, to find that he also was thinking of some sweet memory, for his face was very

good and beautiful as I looked at it.

His was one of those natures to which humanity can always respond, and even while I knew that all the old passionate fire had died out of my love, I could yet feel enough of affection towards him to treat him to playful banter. I laid my hand upon his, and turning my face full towards the eyes I once thought the sweetest and best in all the world, a spice of coquetry danced in my heart as I exclaimed, "A penny for your thoughts! To be sold without reserve, mind."

"They are not worth the money to you," he

answered.

"Why not?"

"Query; just like a woman for questioning."

I did not catch the fond look in his eyes, or surely I

should not have persisted in my teasing.

"You are not answering my first question as to the character of your thoughts," I went on. "Pray be logical, and do not go off to the general subject of a woman's perfections or imperfections."

"Shall I tell you all my thoughts, Maggie?"

"Yes, if their secret burden is not too heavy for me

to bear," I laughed.

"And will you listen patiently," he asked, "without answering them, until I have told you every particular?"

"Certainly; but don't make too much earnestness of a jest," was my final retort, as I looked at his face, so much more noble than in the days of yore.

Thus my hands pulled aside the curtains, and opened

them upon a new day in my life.

# CHAPTER XVI.

#### THE BEGINNING OF OUR TALK.

"He spake of love, such love as spirits feel
In worlds whose course is equable and pure;
No fears to beat away—no strife to heal,
The past unsighed for, and the future sure."

LAODAMIA.

This was the burden of his story; no impassioned, romantic love such as youth knows best, but a great, rare, steadfast, yearning of attachment towards myself, which fascinated me even while I deplored its strength.

I knew that this wooer of mine had come too late; all his past had been to him a great, real, life of sympathetic affection for another, bounded by no inrolling waves of relinquishment or pain! Mine had been a fierce, wild, beating against the infuriated waters of an implacable, pitiless, heart, which ever cried out for the compassionate tenderness it had not received. Moey's grave could not bridge over the difference between us. I only felt that this man at my side was drifting farther away from me by every endearing word that he used. My mental agony grew inexpressible, undefinable; yet mingled with it came a strange thrill of pleasure when I dwelt on the thought, "He knows and loves me at last."

He put his confession into simple, natural, words, telling me that day by day he had learnt to love, until he felt that he could not do without me!

"You need not, Philip. I will stay here some little time longer, but I can never marry you. You are to me Moey's husband and my brother."

"You think such a marriage is not legal? Is that

the difficulty?"

"No, Philip; if I loved you I would make that sacrifice, but I cannot do so now. I love you as my dear, dear, brother—nothing more."

"Have you not been happy here?"

"Yes, very. Happier than for months previously."

"Then why cannot we live this life always?"

I could not tell him that in the misty future I yet hoped to find my here, my prince among men, whom I should adorn with the choicest treasures of my love an unsubstantial idealisation of my brain, for whom I was willing to barter all else if only I could find him. There he sat, the man who had once taken precedence of all who were nearest and dearest to me, deadly pale, his whole face portraying intense mental excitement, yet I could not answer to his love. The whole aspect of affairs was changed. My heart was as free as a little child's, while his was full as the soul of a man could be! To all his pleadings I could answer naught but the sentence, "It cannot be." I believe I put up my hands as if to ward off a blow; it seemed so unnatural that Philip should have to plead for the very thing I was once so ready to lavish upon him, and, worst of all, receive no response to his entreaties. I could not put my hand in his, saying, "Philip, I once loved you, as passionate girls can love. I offered you the whole wealth of my heart, yielding pride and everything I valued which hindered me from giving you my affec-Philip, Philip, I gave you all this, but you spurned it! You treated it as a thing in which you had no part, and it is now too late." Nothing of this sort must pass my lips, yet the memory of other days was upon me as I listened to the voice which once could have made my heaven if it had spoken the words it now breathed. The mistiness and mysteriousness of life pressed heavily upon me as I asked myself the question, "Why did not this boon come earlier?" In my selfishness I thought nothing of the wreck it would have made of Moey's life; the girl who had died

saying, "I've been so happy." Truly my lessons were not all learnt.

At last I answered calmly, yet steadfastly, as a mother would answer a child who sought a forbidden pleasure, "I have no heart to give you, Philip. Once, long ago, I fancied myself in love, and although my affection proved a waste, and its object merely a creation of my ideality, it taught me that in most lives there has been a time when—

"'Love took up the harp of Life, and smote on all the chords with might, Smote the chord of Self that, trembling, passed in music out of sight.'

Love of this fashion came to me once, Philip," I went on, my eyes growing misty over those tender, dreamy days which had fled. "It only glanced in upon my life for a very short season, then died. How I prayed against that love of mine God only knows! Now I am glad that girlish fancy came when it did, for it strengthened me for many an after fight. Once having conquered the mad pain of it, I found that it had taught me a never-to-be-forgotten lesson; yet if I loved you now as I once loved this old love of mine, I would dare all legal power to be your wife."

"Did he not love you?" asked Philip. I believe the idea never once entered his head that he had been the

hero of my old romance.

"No. He never dreamt of such a thing."

I sat silent after this, thinking of Tennyson's exquisite, mournful, lines:—

"Tears, idle tears, I know not what they mean— Tears from the depths of some divine despair Rise in the heart and gather to the eyes In looking on the happy autumn fields, And thinking of the days that are no more. Dear as remembered kisses after death, And sweet as those by hopeless fancy feigned On lips that are for others; deep as love— Deep as first love, and wild with all regret, O Death in Life! the days that are no more." The old homestead rose before me; I was listening again for Philip's avowal of love, while the music of nature entwined itself about my soul as upon that night so long ago. With an effort I brought myself again from them. Looking down upon Philip's pale, passionate, pleading face, I would have yielded up half the days of my life if I could have given him a different answer! I dared not let him see this, so I rose from my seat, and, standing up, firm and resolute, I held out my hand to him, saying, "Let us be friends, Philip; I can never be anything else, but, at least, let us be this."

Shall I ever forget the concentrated pain in his reply? His voice was hoarse and unnatural, as mine had been upon that well-remembered night. If I had wished him retribution, surely none keener could have smitten him than that he was now undergoing. "Let us talk it over, Maggie," he entreated.

I sat down again, reluctantly, for I knew the futility of any conversation upon this subject, and even while I complied with his request, he was nervous and ill at ease, yet tender as a woman in his questioning.

"Will you tell me one thing, Maggie? Do you love any one else," he asked, his eager eyes seeking mine.

"No. I am free, entirely, from any feeling of this description."

"Then I will teach you to care for me!" he cried, exultantly.

"Philip, dear Philip," I entreated, mournfully, "will you not believe me, I have no love to give! Sometimes I think it has gone out of my life for ever. I cannot compel myself to affection. Truthfully, I sometimes believe myself indifferent to it. I make up my mind to live for my work and for others."

"You cannot do it, Maggie, you have too much heart"—was this the man who once said I had none? "You do not know what a woman's life is without the

ties of husband and home. Come to me, darling, and let me teach you a new lesson in happiness."

My heart was aching over him, yet I dared not perjure myself after this fashion, so I resolutely steeled myself against his importunities. I was sorely tempted to go to him, to strive to love him, and be calmly happy, as many women are in the cares and domestic affections which surround them; but, thank God! my better, higher, nature asserted itself, and I determinately refused.

The temptation was a sore one, such as perhaps few girls will understand. The facts of the case were simply these. I had no nearer relations than Aunt Isobel, Chrissie, and Philip; little but the work of my pen to support me; none but these to love me, while all this might be altered if I became Philip's wife. True, there was the other side of the question, legally the thing was wrong, but I held it to be morally right in the sight of God. I still hold it so; I would never counsel such a marriage, but I would not forbid it! Then I thought of Maggie, the child who was twining her little life so closely round mine, who was not my own, although loved as such!

What should I do without her pretty childish ways to cheer me? My heart grew very sad as I thought of this truth, and the consequence of my refusal to be Philip's wife would, press heavily upon me. I grew stoical and calm inwardly, waiting for life to show its hardest side to me! Was not God more pitiful than my fears? He was. Oh, if only I had loved Him more!

Thus it came about that I returned to H—, but not alone. Little Maggie was in my arms. Our Father had left me my child-comforter; dreariness fled when her soft arms were round my neck, her little fair head pillowed on my shoulder. She was Philip's child, yet fifty times a day I called her my own, own, darling. Everywhere I went she was my

shadow,—into the schools, through the dusty streets, away into the meadows we went together, until her sweet childish influence made me almost as young as she.

When anxieties grew great—and they were many—I used to take her upon my lap, and sing to her the hymns of my childhood, until I was wrapt in quietude and peace by the soothing influence of my own voice and their music. With the old zest I watched for winter's coming because of the long cosy evenings, and craved with all a mother's yearning, to hear her first lispings.

I always seemed to have her in my arms; she was so pure, so fresh, my wee, dainty darling; no nursemaid ever carried child as I did, yet she was no burden

to me.

In voiceless intercession I ever prayed to keep her near me; she seemed the grand link that drew me to a better, happier, life! In my dark sky, she was fair as the morning stars which sang together; it seemed as if I were reaching into a depth of life before unsounded and a sweetness unsurpassed.

The very lovesomeness of my treasure filled my heart with untold tenderness towards the mothers who had laid away their little ones under tiny mounds, in nameless graves, until Christ should dispel the cruel, ruthless, darkness which enshrouded them until the glad morn of resurrection, where no cheerless groping after

our loved can know a place!

The week after my return, I went into that churchyard of H—, once so distasteful to me, now pregnant with so many memories; as I walked in and out between the newly-made graves, I entered into the sorrows of these women who had put by the little childish feet and hands, covered up with the cold earth the little faces, which, though old and worn before their time, dirty and elfish, or wizened and weary, were yet theirs to kiss, theirs to scold or to pet, theirs to leave the void behind. Over these little graves the sheep were trying to find pasturage; then turned from them to seek others not so newly turfed. While I looked at the deserted mounds so pitifully small, I yearned to do something for the mothers left behind.

Resuming my visiting, my resolve suffered many shocks, but only such as made my experience wider, and my life nearer to the mark God willed it to reach. Sometimes I grew strangely discouraged, for this work was not all pleasant: oftentimes the women were fretful and disagreeable, as if they were almost intolerant of being thus helped and taught! Poor souls,

earth's lessons proved very hard to them!

Chrissie was full of a grave concern when I confided in her concerning Philip's offer, while in an outburst of loving trust I told her the whole story of my love for him when at the Hollow. "You poor darling," she said, as she came nearer to me, in her sympathy; "how glad I am that you have so conquered! If you had married him, you could never have been happy. Love, great, true, strong love, is the only thing that can make marriage the holy sacrament it ought to be. No matter how lonely a woman's life may be, she has no right to make it less so at the cost of a man's happiness."

Love's intuition came to me as I queried, "Did you

ever love any one, Chrissie?"

"Yes, dearie. I would rather not speak of it yet; sometimes it hurts me still, even while I never question God's wisdom in removing from my life the good I most coveted."

"Tell me one thing, Chrissie—did you love him very

much, dearer than life, as I did Philip?"

"Yes, Maggie; I put him first and foremost in my life, as a woman puts the true object of her affection. If I could have died for him, I would have done so, 'Loving perfectly.' He was my first, last, love; brave-

hearted and noble as he was manly, yet his was a mere fancy for me, not a 'love strong as death' such as mine, or he would not have so easily forgotten me. My passion for him is over, but it was a crowning glory for which I still ever retain a calm tenderness, nothing more. Still I would rather not tell you the whole story to-night."

"Will this love of yours never be crowned, dear?" I still persisted, as I watched the sweetness of her face, and marvelled how any man could resist her pure, good, life; how he could put away from him so great

a gift.

"No, Maggie; he did not love me as I loved him. We were little more than boy and girl; so when my father interposed a time of waiting before the fulfilment of our engagement—or rather before the engagement itself was made—he gradually cooled in his ardour. I was too proud to sue for his love, so we passed away from each other like 'two ships that touch in passing,' then sail away for ever!"

"Oh, Chrissie, will he never, never, come back? It seems so hard that so many girls should be allowed to

suffer thus."

"He cannot come back, dear—would not if he could. As I have told you, we were both young, but a girl is older than a boy in her feelings, so she loves with greater strength. He was only a poor college student, full of learning and ardent in the pursuit of all his studies until I exalted him to the position of a god in my life, a ruler of my destiny. The dream is over; the face of all the world changed to me when it died out, yet my life has been far from unhappy, a long way removed from the greyness of which some women talk. At first I fancied that it had set me alone, aloof from all my kind, but I found that it only drew me nearer, causing me to put my hand in theirs so that we might stand or fall together."

Some strange impulse compelled me; even now I

cannot tell why with resistless force it hurried me on to ask the question. Putting myself beside her with a caressing tenderness, the cause of which I could only fathom by the obvious bond of suffering between us, I pleaded, "Will you tell me the name of this old lover of yours?"

She raised her beautiful, proud, head—I thought it had never looked more queenly than then—and with reluctance answered, "Do you really wish to know?"

Another time my womanliness would have restrained my curiosity; but not so to-night. Again I persisted, "Yes." With slow, hesitating words she spoke her lover's name—"Alex da Costa."

For a few moments it half stunned me into silence, then: "Are you so much surprised?" came in questioning accents from Chrissie's lips.

"Twice wronged," I ejaculated; "first he robbed

you of your love, and then of home."

"No, Maggie; it is you who are doing the wrong, not Alex. He did not rob me, darling. Of my love I gave him freely, generously, as a woman should, and I have lost nothing by the gift I bestowed." She went on in her sweet, low voice: "You know what Longfellow says in 'Evangeline':—

"'Talk not of wasted affection; affection never was wasted,
If it enrich not the heart of another, its waters returning
Back to their springs, like the rain, shall fill them full of refreshment;

That which the fountain sends forth returns again to the fountain."

"I believe it, dear; no woman ever loves in vain. There is always a wise purpose in it. I don't mean by this the infatuation which some girls call affection, but the godlike, purified, sort which illumines life, even when its own light is shrouded in darkness."

"It is a thing to be thankful for, even though it does cause 'aching of heart, the restless, unsatisfied longing,' when in the end it brings forth the fruit of human

sympathy to thousands of other passionate throbbing souls."

"Do you know, Maggie, I have sometimes thought how glad I should be if God had given to me the gift of authorship. I should have tried to creep very close to the hearts of those who live half hidden lives; who take their aching brains and toiling hands into their work, longing for the completion of their journey because they have not learnt the lesson of enduring after the fashion in which God would have them do it. If I could only whisper His perfected love into their weary lives, I should feel that all earth's choicest gifts were as nothing in comparison."

"Who told you of this perfected love?" I queried;

"I wish you would tell me all about it."

"Well, dearie, I was taught it very quickly, but very surely. One day I was madly, wildly despairing of my life; I was so thoroughly sick of it that I cared nothing about the gift bestowed upon me. Faint of heart, and mad with a wild longing to be free from all restraint, I wandered off, alone, to try and get rid of the burden of my thoughts. On I went, through circuitous roads, over meadows and fields, until I came to the little village of W---. Not wishing to go through it, I turned off to the right, and found myself at the entrance of its churchyard. The church itself was so hidden by the foliage of many huge-limbed trees that I had failed to notice it until I stood almost at its very portals. The doors were open, but no thought of entering them crossed my mind. I sat down upon a grey, old stone, sacred to the memory of a family long departed, and let the mournfulness of the moment have full dominion over me. The morbidness grew as I continued sitting there, until, to my imagination, the very trees chanted a solemn, funereal dirge, tossing their branches like sable plumes towards the sky.

"Suddenly, like an inspiration, my mood changed,

for, from the church's open door, through the manyhued windows, came a triumphant song of praise, so melodious that I listened in sheer astonishment.

"' A few more storms shall beat
On this wild, rocky shore,
And we shall be where tempests cease
And surges swell no more.
Then, O my Lord, prepare
My soul for that great day;
Oh, wash me in Thy precious blood,
And take my sins away'—

rang out the notes so full and clear that they startled me with their beauty. Who ever before heard such harmony from a village choir? Entranced with the ravishment of the music, I drew nearer to its sound.

"' 'A few more struggles here,
A few more partings o'er,
A few more toils, a few more tears,
And we shall weep no more.
Then, O my Lord, prepare
My soul for that bright day;
Oh, wash me in Thy precious blood,
And take my sins away'—

flowed forth the grand old hymn. You know my passionate love for music. This was almost masterly in its effect: the very touch of the organist was more than skilful—it was the handling of a genius. I stole inside the door, and while the last verse was being sung, I bowed my head as if in prayer; but the music had driven all else from my mind. I was intoxicated with its grandeur and sweetness.

"Little did I think how God's supreme love had led me to that wayside church to hear the words of one who should woo me from my sense of sorrows to a sense of sin, and from thence to the Sin-Healer, until I knew fully the meaning of justification by faith."

# CHAPTER XVII.

### THE CONSUMMATION OF IT.

"THE sermon which followed was like the trumpet of resurrection to me. By it I found new existence. was as if the hand of God had led me to this fountain of healing, to this well-spring of life. Since then I have heard of this preacher's eloquence, his fame, and his power, as if pertaining to another, not to the simple. homely, yet scholarly man who that evening preached to a congregation numbering less than fifty. At first my eyes rested mechanically upon the preacher, then wandered off to the tossing branches that fluttered their leaves against the window; but this state of mind was of short duration.

"Full, forcible, and powerful; free from that bombastic, self-satisfied drawl so prevalent amongst men of his class—his voice repeated the word of the text, 'They wandered in the wilderness in a solitary way; they found no city to dwell in. Hungry and thirsty, their soul fainted in them. Then they cried unto the Lord in their trouble, and He delivered them out of their distresses. And He led them forth by the right

way.'

"He commenced his sermon by quoting those lines of George Macdonald's:—

> "'Come to me, come to me, O my God; Come to me everywhere! Let the trees mean Thee, and the grassy sod, And the water, and the air.

"' For Thou art so far, that I often doubt, And on every side I stare, Searching within and looking without, If Thou art anywhere.

"Then he looked round upon his congregation with a magnetic power in his eye, as if he would draw the gaze of the whole of them upon himself, while he expounded to them the way God would lead them.

"' 'My friends,' he commenced, 'this is the cry of the human heart when it is dimly feeling after, not comprehending, God. Life has loosed its hold upon pleasant things, and the shadows seem to fall behind and before, until we are compassed about with them, and the soul finding no sunshine, no rest, feels dimly after some higher good than that of earth's possessions, vet cries with as much doubting as faith. ing may be in some heart to-night; you may be doubting if God is really anywhere because of the longthrown shadows settling round your soul; you are weary and faint, tired and enfeebled, while in desperation you cry out to God for His aid, doubting, shrinking, even while you plead. Let me comfort you. near as the light is to the eye, so near is He to you! No farther away! Put out your hand of faith, poor soul, and grasp Him. You answer, "I cannot; I do not feel Him near. Is He round about me when there is no clear shining into my life?" Yes, even so; the clouds obscure the sun, but you do not doubt its existence because the evidence of its brilliance is lacking! Remove the clouds, receive the splendour! This is what I am asking you to do to-night, only in a spiritual sense. You are saying to yourselves:-

"" If only that perfect tale were true,
Which, with touch of sunny gold,
Of the ancient, many makes one anew,
And simplicity manifold.""

Yet you will not believe the narrative because of its child-like simplicity. You grope after God because you will not flash the revelation of His own light upon your searchings, even though you have the declaration, "Can any by searching find out God?" with its definite answer. Nay, my friends, He is round about

you, it is true, but no searching will discover Him without faith! My heart yearns over you. I see you tempest-tossed and weary, living your daily lives out, fretted and fumed by petty cares. I hear your murmurs and your disbeliefs, as men hear the din of warfare, which they have no power to stop. I tell you, my brethren, my sisters, my heart is bleeding over you. The way is rough and thorny; I know it all. I have felt the burden and heat of the day as you have done, and by my own sufferings, weariness, and labours I beseech you to follow the example I give you of casting the burden of your care upon God. You make answer in your hearts—I hear it as though spoken. see it written upon your countenances—"You know nothing of our sore strivings, naught of the hard poverty we endure; your hands are white by reason of their freedom from toil, ours are hard and horny with labour; yet we eat little else but bread, while our children work almost before they learn to play." Ay, I hear you all; yet I say this great fatherly hand of God is over you, and He is as able to make your road smoother as He is mine! You know I love you! I have shown it to you when I have watched with you, shed tears to mingle with yours, felt every throb of your sorrow as if it had been my own; yet I tell you this love of mine is weak and pitiful in comparison with that of your heavenly Friend. Will you not hear me, when I implore you to, as one who watcheth for your souls?

"'Am I not your brother? When your sky is laden with trouble mine is the same! I tell you, oh, my people, my heart is ever throbbing with yours, yet my aid cannot avail to stave off the woesome burdens every life must know. Will you not come to the One who is ever calling you, and take Him for your brother? Shall I tell you of the King who stooped to low estate, working as you work, for His daily bread; seeking, as you seek, rest after toil; hungry,

sore tempted, and sorrowful, as you, too, are after Him? Yet what avails it if you will not come to Him? Do I hear you say, "I am coming, yet how shall I find the way?" Oh, my friends, you whom I ever carry about in my heart, the way is so simple that a "wayfaring man, though a fool, need not err therein!" Shall I give you the key with which to open wide the gates? Here it is, a simple, yet reliable one, "Have faith in God."

"Then he addressed himself to the more intellectual portion of his congregation, pleading for their souls, as he had pleaded for those of his poorer brethren. I listened as I had never listened before. The fascination of this wonderful doctrine was upon me! Christianity opened itself up before my eyes like a new dream of delight, after the aching desolation which

earth's experience had wrought.

"The sermon was ended, and the time had been to me almost as solemn as if I had seen the face of God! My resolve was taken. I would wait and speak to the preacher, tell him how careless I had been about this greatest good, how slothful with regard to the work each mortal has given him to do. I resolved to ask his aid, for I firmly believed that in speaking to him I should fix the resolution more strongly upon my mind. After all, there is nothing in the world so likely to aid a steadfast holding to the standard of these higher moods as making a confident of the person whose influence gave them birth.

"When the singing was over—that sweet, wonderful melody, shall I ever forget it?—I waited about, with the hope that he would come out of the church by the same door as that which I entered by. Still I waited; then I asked the clerk where his minister was, 'In the ladies' chapel, miss. He won't be out for more than an hour; there's a Bible-class always after evensong.'

"So I stayed in the old churchyard; my ardour no whit abated with the length of time I had to stay, until

the clerk took pity on my loneliness, and came forward to ask me if I would go over the church.

"I assented, because I saw the personal pride he took in it, and I also feared to wound his feelings by a refusal. Following him through its dismal aisles, I listened patiently to his explanations concerning its restorations also to wonderful dissertation upon the history of its grey walls. At last he came! I was almost ashamed of the position in which I found myself. It was growing more than dusk, almost dark, while I was waiting to accost a perfect stranger, yet the impulse of my soul was too strong to be bound by conventionalities, thus even this fact failed to daunt me. He had spoken to my heart, and my heart therefore must prompt me in my movements.

"I advanced out of the darkness, and was about to introduce myself, when he held out his hand, saying, 'Ah, you are the lady whom I noticed in my congre-

gation to-night?'

"Every drop of blood seemed receding from my body, leaving me white and speechless. I think he saw my intense nervousness, for he went on, speaking in a grave, kindly, almost fatherly, fashion until I grew more quiet, then he paused for me to speak. I had so much to ask, so many lessons to learn, that I hardly knew where to commence my questioning. At last, with much trembling, I asked, or rather faltered, 'These are truths of which you have spoken to-night? Is God really as near as you say?'

"' Nearer.' Then in his turn questioning me—' You

are seeking Him?'

"'Yes,' I faltered, while the whole cry of my soul

was, 'If I could but find Him?'

whom you are searching for is closer to you than I am. From your earliest days He has known every thought and desire of your heart, as I have never done; you have heard the way in which I have spoken to you

to-night; now, do you believe I would aid you if I could?'

"I was irresistibly drawn to him as I answered, 'I

know you would.'

"'Yet I have never yet done anything for you as Christ has; never loved you as He has done! Why should you believe in my power, my willingness to aid you more than in His?"

"'I cannot see Him,' I answered. 'And God has

dealt very hardly with me.'

"'You are in trouble, then?' he queried. 'Well, if God has given you to bear the burden of bereavement, you know He can restore to you the things of which death has smalled you.'

death has spoiled you.'

"'It is not that, oh, it is not that!' I cried in a tremor of agitation; 'yet a great sorrow has come into my life, until I am weary of the secret bitterness of my existence. Tell me, what I must do to come to God?'

"'Just nothing; He is your loving, tender, friend, asking you to cast your care upon Him, and that is the sum and substance of all you have to do. Can you call this anything?'

"'He has dealt very hardly with me: I did not ask life, yet He gave it to me, and now it is a burden

almost intolerable to be borne,' I cried.

"'Was there no wise purpose to be answered in this imposing of the burden? Did your soul need no tuition?' he asked. 'Let me speak freely and frankly to you. Are not all these trials sent to souls in order that they may operate upon them for the good of mankind? Can you not realise that they are but the voice of God calling to you? Do they not strive to woo you from an ignoble existence to a more glorious one of sympathising toil, and entrance into human experience? We all have our woes, our sorrows, and desolations, our days of wild despairing misery, yet the voice of God calls through all to a higher, nobler, life.'

"Maggie, I listened to him as one in a dream. I could not understand God's ways or teachings, but I was longing, with unutterable yearnings, to do so, when he again spoke, 'Let me repeat to you a few lines which will convey some little idea of my own history. To me they are a story in three verses; a life history without comments.' Then he began in a voice which was in itself a tale—

"" Once I sat on a crimson throne,
And I held the world in fee,
Below me I heard my brother's moan,
And I bent me down to see.

"' Lovingly bent and looked on them, But I had no inward pain; I sat in the heart of my ruby gem, Like a rainbow, without the rain.

"' My throne is vanished; helpless, I lie At the foot of its broken stair; And the sorrows of all humanity Through my heart make a thoroughfare."

He finished, while to my astonishment I found my eves wet with tears. It was not the lines alone that caused such a result, it was the tender utterance of their sentiments that brought them forth. Thinking upon the truths they conveyed I walked along by his side, regardless of all else but the fact that I, too, had my 'vanished throne,' but the future alone would reveal if the sorrows of humanity would make a thoroughfare through my heart. 'Will you try and not nurse your trouble?' he asked; 'promise me this, and in return I will assure you that it will gradually lessen and die away. Grief fostered is grief incurable; sorrow put away from you is sorrow healed, especially if God's aid is sought in the placing: in putting it at a distance from you. Go to Him tonight, tell Him all your pain, then ask Him to relieve you of it, and, asking in Christ's name, for His sake, the Father will answer you. Will you promise me this. my child?'

"His grave voice appealed to me, as did the fatherliness of his manner. Looking up at him I answered,

'I will,' intending faithfully to keep my promise.

"'And now may I ask your name?' he continued, as we strolled through the long grass, heavy with the night dews. I told him, and in exchange he gave me his own, leaving me outside our gate. Papa was away from home that night, so I did not hurry indoors, but walked up and down the garden paths in a state of

mind perfectly indescribable.

"Like the runaway slave I could have almost appealed to the 'sky and sea!" The night was awfully, solemnly, still, the air heavy with electric influences, while the elements, alone, touched the strange silence with its vague mutterings of the coming storm. A little later, and I saw the wildest, fiercest, tempest which I have ever witnessed. It was so weirdly grand that I almost held my breath in awe; the thunder rolled and vibrated like mighty roars of artillery, while the lightning flashed as if the universe were sinking into the power of the destroying fire. In the midst of the tunult I cried with unwonted fervour to God for aid, for power to put my sorrow from me, and—He gave me peace.

"I stood out under the black, black, sky, and made my vows to God as a mortal to the Immortal, when

lo! the anguish fled, and a great calm ensued.

"'Peace be still!' came sounding over the troubled waters of the sea, and I was not afraid. So I listened to the battle going on around me as the safely harboured might look out upon the huge waves which for them have no destroying power."

Chrissie finished. I had listened to her with a vague foreboding that in reality her story was not ended, when Aunt Isobel's voice came to us, calling, "Maggie!

Chrissie! come in, I want you at once!"

# CHAPTER XVIII.

#### SEEKING NEW DUTIES.

"If wealth is gone, then something is gone—Quick, make up thy mind,
And much wealth find.

If honour is gone, then much is gone—Seek glory to find.

If courage is gone, then all is gone!—
"Twere better thou hadst never been born."

GOETHE.

OBEDIENT to the summons, we went indoors to meet another trouble, which we had long foreseen, but with the strength of which we apparently had no power to grapple. Poor auntie! Even while the blow was falling I could not help noticing her almost tragic suffering as she turned to us, whispering, "There is such a dreadfully low man in there," pointing to the kitchen, "and he will not go away." Then she literally shook with the combined force of her terror and her sobs.

All attempts at comforting her seemed useless, so I went into the kitchen, leaving Chrissie to find out,

from her, the cause of distress.

The transition from our talk to the scene awaiting me was painful in the extreme. As I entered the door a man rose from one of the chairs, and respectfully removing his hat, waited for me to speak. Haughtily—I could hardly tell for what reason—I asked his business. The man's whole manner changed at the tones of defiance which rang in my voice, as he answered, sullenly, "I'll soon satisfy you as to that, miss. We poor men have enough to do to keep our families without keeping fine ladies into the bargain."

The insolence in the words, as well as the fashion after which they were spoken, fairly roused me. With

an utter scorn, too great to express, I said, "State your grievance as quickly as possible, and then leave this house!"

For answer he laid before me a long, greasy, bill, containing the account of sundry items of beef and mutton supplied to us at various times; but when my eye fell on the sum total, I grew fairly frightened at the amount.

"We do not owe you all this," I quickly exclaimed, as with a long-drawn breath of utter helplessness I took in the exact state of our affairs.

"Indeed, and you do, miss; and it's a' awful lot of

money for us to lose," he said.

"You are anxious to make the worst of it," I answered, as I regained some slight measure of calm-

ness. "Why do you talk about losing it?"

"Well, you see, miss, that 'ere bill has been sent in over and over again, until at last I says to my missus, 'I ain't going to stand this no longer, so I'm going down to the house with it myself, for the last time, and I won't leave it without the money."

I stood aghast; then, recovering myself, I asked, "Will you leave it with me, and I will promise you

payment within a fortnight?

He demurred; until, some kindlier feeling prompting him, he assented. Going out of the back entrance he pulled the door after him with an energy as noisy as it was trying to my nerves. Once it was fairly closed upon me I faced the sorrow, the fresh woe coming upon us! My God! what I suffered in that hour! All my efforts seemed unfruitful, for we could not live upon the meagre pittance which comprised our income. Oh, this lack of gold! how dreadful it was!

What strange, pitiless fate was ever driving us nearer, and nearer, to ruin and separation? How the stern facing of life hurt me! yet something must be done! We all three sat in the tiny parlour, with averted eyes, not one of us daring to look in the face of the other.

Aunt Isobel seemed robbed of her stately, commanding, manner, as she bowed beneath the storm, while with contemptuous scorn, she almost cursed the man who had dared show her such impertinence. Well, the blow had fallen, and after its first stinging fearfulness we grew more composed as we realised that no worse grief could ever cross our path, for we could no longer go on living together.

"Could we not go to Philip for a time?" asked our aunt, as we talked over matters, into which no glimmering of brightness crept. "It would give us time to

make some definite plans for our future.'

"You and Chrissie can," I answered; "but auntie, now you must let me have my own way, because I see no other of living honestly in the sight of God and man. I shall take a situation of some sort. I am young and strong; moreover, I believe, God will prosper me."

"What could you do?" asked both aunt and

Chrissie, with simultaneous, eager, questioning.

"I could teach. I shall at once advertise for a situation, first writing to our old rector to ask if I

may allow references to be made to him."

Many and urgent were their entreaties that I should do nothing of the sort; but, as you may imagine, I did not for one single moment entertain the idea of living beneath Philip's roof, and being dependent upon him for my bread, after refusing to be his wife. The answer from the rector was satisfactory; so abolishing my false pride, I advertised for a situation, and positively did so in one of the papers which freely circulated in the vicinity of Elm Hollow. Then I waited for the results. Meantime, we put the whole of the furniture into an auctioneer's hands, for sale, intending with its proceeds to pay off all our debts, and commence life afresh. Even Mr. Haverill's gift went, for we were determined that every penny should be paid before we left H——. Instinctively, I felt that our home once broken

up, we three would never live together again. No answers came to my advertisement, so I was growing thoroughly faint-hearted, when one morning I entered the little stationer's shop at the top of the village. For once it was actually full of customers, so I took up one of the daily papers while awaiting my turn to be served.

Listlessly scanning over the list headed "Wanted," I happened upon the following:—"Immediately, a Clerk and Cashier. Excellent references and security required. Liberal salary given.—Apply, personally, at Messrs. Selby and Harwood's." Then followed the address.

"I will take this paper," I said, laying down my penny, as the proprietor of the shop came forward to wait upon me; then I bought the trifle for which I had gone in, and went home with a fresh idea in my mind. I had received a splendid training in arithmetic and mathematics, therefore this new turn which had been given to my thoughts did not seem to me so futile as it may to you when I state the outcome of my purchase.

I wrote to the advertisers, stating that, though I knew nothing of the business technicalities of figures, I was a good arithmetician, and thought it possible that my services might be the very thing for which they sought. Two days elapsed, when I received a letter, directed in a bold, clerkly hand, stating that the firm of Messrs. Selby, Harwood, and Co. approved of my handwriting, et cætera, but they wanted a clerk who thoroughly understood the routine of the business. Also that the application ought to have been personal. All that day I carried the letter about with me, wondering what sort of a business it was with which the clerk was supposed to have so thorough a knowledge of the details, until at last my resolve was taken. I would "apply personally," and if possible obtain the situation. impulsive, I had no sooner made the resolve than I cast about for the means with which to carry it out; also for the best words with which I could break the news to Aunt Isobel.

My very soul was sick of the shifts of poverty, and I was fast journeying towards the thought that in honest toil, no matter of what sort, no degradation could ever exist! The omnipotence of labour, over ease, was forcing itself upon my mind with a power against which all others lacked resistance, so my pride of birth and spirit came down together, until I learnt to smile serenely at the former figments of my brain, when I had exalted the bearing of birth and breeding over the grand, honest, labour of the head and hands, which is

so infinitely above all things else.

I showed the letter to Chrissie, and told her of my resolve to see these people, in order that I might obtain the position of clerk. I argued with her after this fashion—"I have a perfect knowledge of figures, consequently I could soon learn all that they required of me, only I have not the money requisite to take me to them." Chrissie was not so sanguine as I, but she was more than ready to help me; so we both turned out the contents of our pockets, and counted the ready-money which we mutually possessed, to find that the sum total was seven shillings and a few odd pence, while exactly four times that amount would barely carry me to, and from, the place from which my letter had come.

"If you could only wait a couple of days we could manage it," said Chrissie, finally; "but I suppose by that time the situation would be snapped up, and the travelling funds would only be wasted."

"Even waiting will not bring the money," I said, mournfully, "so it will be better for us not to discuss the question any farther."

Worn with sorrow, hopeless and helpless, I went indoors to muse upon the ever-increasing troubles with which God continually met us. Little did I dream

how near was the deliverance; how Chrissie was going to prove to me the wondrous depths of her love and self-sacrifice.

I will not beat about the bush in telling you of the way in which she furnished me with the requisite travelling funds. You remember the pendant of pearls which I, so wickedly, refused to wear upon the night of the ball? She sold it! It was the only jewel of real value which she possessed, and God alone can tell what the parting with it must have been to her; yet she disposed of it for my sake, leaving me powerless ever to repay so great a debt.

The next day I journeyed to S——, and entered the house which was to be my future home! My heart was almost breaking with the effort required of me! I, a Da Costa, intended to sue of a tradesman a place in his household, for the sake of the bread he would

give and the roof which should shelter me!

"Labouring for the bread which perisheth," was henceforth to bear a new meaning to me. As I opened the shop door my knees trembled beneath their burden, the undertaking seemed so much greater in reality than it had when viewed from a distance.

A shopman courteously set a chair, with the regulated bow of his kind, asking what description of goods

I would please to look at.

"I wished to see one of the firm," I just managed to articulate, as a sudden mistiness came over the whole place. Feeling as if I should like to catch at anything for support I sat down, with my heart's beating almost stifling me, while the involuntary thought crossed my mind, "I must be going to die, before very long, or these strange sensations would not forecast it."

Only a year or two before this happened I should have considered it contamination to have touched the hand of such a man as the proprietor of this shop; now I could almost have sued for his favour, as a

servant would from the hand of her mistress.

With all this, once knowing him, he proved himself as truly a gentleman as any which I had met in my own position. He was not polished—a hundred times a day his bluntness hurt me—yet he was as noble and true as it is possible for a man to be.

When he stood before me I could hardly command myself sufficiently to say, "I wish to speak to you alone!" for the enormity of the task I was about to

attempt came upon me with all its weight.

"Certainly. Will you follow me?" So I walked up a shop, as I had never done, in such a manner, before, feeling that upon his decision rested the whole of my future.

We entered a small office, leading into an inner one, where, having settled himself in his usual chair, he asked me—"What can I do for you? Some slight mistake in your account, I presume? We will soon rectify it."

Before seating himself, he had placed a comfortable chair for me, and from its depths I faintly answered, "I have not come for this. You advertised for a clerk, I believe?"

"Yes." He looked, but did not speak, his amazement.

"I answered your advertisement. My name is Da Costa," I said, as I laid my card before him.

"For a relation of yours?" he queried, as I again nervously, took my seat.

"No; for myself."

"My good lady," he began; then, having recovered himself, he answered in very decided tones, "We want a thorough clerk who can write a good, bold, hand; a good arithmetician, with a knowledge of the business—in fact, we want a dissecting clerk."

"What is a dissecting clerk?" I asked.

"One who understands every branch of his business—knows what belongs to each department, and thus can understand the profits upon it."

The futility of my quest began to dawn upon me as I still queried, "Would it be possible for me to learn all this? I am poor, and can find no way in which to earn my bread. Would it be within the scope of my ability to learn these duties?"

A sudden thought struck him. Turning to me, he

asked, "Are you really in earnest?"

"Yes; oh, yes! if you only knew!" I answered.

"Would you care to come here as cashier only? That is, you would have to receive, and account for, all moneys passing through the hands of the assistants, and this is an onerous duty; still, if you can give good references, I think this would be a step for you in gaining the knowledge you need."

"What salary could you give?" I asked.

"Twenty pounds a-year, with residence in the house."

"Must I live with the assistants?" I queried, as a shudder of repugnance came over me, while the inward thought burnt in my heart, "I never can."

"I am afraid you would have to come in contact with them. But the house is large; if you wish it, I have no doubt the housekeeper could find you a separate room after business hours; but you will find it very lonely."

"I do not mind that," I impulsively exclaimed. "I can always amuse myself with reading or writing."

"Then, perhaps I can help you. You like music?" This questioningly.

"Yes, very much; it is my one weakness, or solace."

" Ah!"

This was the only answer he made; but I afterwards found that I touched the right chord in this man's breast, that my love for music had gained me what even a knowledge of the details of business would have failed to do.

A silence ensued; then he said, as he turned over a heap of letters lying on his desk," I have your address I will write to you in the course of a day or two."

As he bowed me out of his establishment I knew that my cause was won—that for the sake of gaining an honest living a Da Costa would yet enter upon the duties of a draper's clerk!

## CHAPTER XIX.

#### NEW SCENES.

"The trivial round, the common task, Will furnish all we ought to ask— Boom to deny ourselves, a road To bring us daily nearer God."

KEBLE.

I PRAY God that no false shame may creep into my mind, or into the words my pen may trace, as I tell the story of this working time of mine. In honest labour there never can be shame, but the very traditions in which I was reared suffered outrage when I took up the new duties that God allotted to me. If I, now rarely touch upon or mention them, it is simply and solely because I try to forget the pain and not the toil of those years.

For months I suffered keenly from the utter change of associations, yet once fairly used to them I accepted each thing as it came, with a quiet, if not perfectly

contented, spirit.

Philip had entreated me not to accept such a situation; even Mr. Haverill had urged me to come again to them, and wait for something better; but I was firm-I could not be dependent, and this seemed the

one sole opening for me.

Three weeks after I had first entered the shop I took up my permanent abode under its roof, engaged as a servant to a tradesman! Far be it from me to speak one word against my employer, for during the whole of the four years in which I served him he was, in his dealings with me, as honourable and gentlemanly as if the bluest blood of the aristocracy had been flowing in his veins! Nay, more, he was kindness itself in his courteous treatment and manly behaviour towards his assistants, until I learnt to look up to him with a strange mixture of love and reverence, so that even his bluntness was forgotten. His wife and family? Of the former I will say nothing—for her character will develop itself in my story—excepting that, at first, I thought her the embodiment of every Christian virtue, even while I knew that no power on earth could ever constitute her a lady.

By a lady, I mean a woman whose birth and breeding, especially the latter, are unexceptional; a possession as distinctly marked from aught else as the pure, steady, light of diamonds is from the superficial imitation of so-called brilliants. At that time, I foolishly placed birth and breeding above everything else which the world contained. "Of what pedigree is she?" would have been my text, not "Is she good,

true, and womanly?"

The family consisted of two sons, familiarly called "Clem" and "Fred."

Clemence was my own age within a month or two, Fred several years younger. The elder son was grave, quiet, gentlemanly, and well educated; the younger a mere boy in his actions, a genial child of nature, whom I learnt to love with a sort of half-pitying tenderness, such as we give to those whose lives are after the fashion of the butterfly's giddy, yet fleeting, foibles and joys.

It is no easy task to tell one's own story. If it were so I could give you the impression which both these lives made on mine; as it is I dare not.

Let me go back to the day when I arrived at the station of S—— for the second time, and was whirled along, in a cab, through its broad, prosperous-looking, streets, to my future home. With a timidity never before felt by me I alighted at the side door of this business house, and was conducted, by an untidy, slatternly-looking servant, up a long passage until we came to a little door communicating with the shop. At this she gave a loud knock, and in a moment her summons was answered by my future employer. I stood there in a proud, stately, silence. It seemed so unendurable that I should be under his rule. Then I bowed, scarcely able to articulate the "good morning" which common courtesy demanded.

He was as nervous as I. To this day I firmly believe that in the first instance the man gave me my situation through sheer pity, for he restlessly passed the door, backwards and forwards, in his hand, as if I were some wild animal awaiting his caging; then he returned my salutation; and, caressing his beard as an outlet for his feelings, said, "Oh, yes, you are come! I will call Miss Hamilton to show you your room.

The porter shall help with your luggage."

For nearly five minutes the blankness of the door remained, then a sudden clicking of its handle betrayed the approach of the assistant he had promised to send to me. We mutually bowed; turning her head with an astonished look and a most winning smile, she said, "You will follow me. I believe we are to share the same bedroom!"

I mounted the long, narrow staircase, until we reached a room of far larger dimensions than my late sleeping apartment in H——, and before I was aware of her intention she was helping me in taking off my jacket and hat; then she poured out some water

in the hand-basin, finally retreating to the window, toying with a rose fastened in her dress as she did so.

"Shall I wait for you?"—A pause, for I was washing my face in order to hide the signs of my disquietude—"Or will you stay here until the dinner-bell rings, when I will fotch you?"

rings, when I will fetch you?"

"Thank you; I shall be ready to go with you in a moment or two," I answered, as I continued to dash the water in my face to conceal its pallor at the thought of the ordeal I must soon undergo.

So she stood there, waiting for me, while, with trembling hand, I brushed out my hair and braided it

afresh in order to gain a little more time.

Stealing a glance at her, I took in every detail of her personality. She was a tall girl, of slim build and figure, dark and beautiful in complexion, with eyes almost like stars, and a manner as perfect as it was womanly. Putting out my hand, I said, "We are to

be bedfellows; let us be friends also."

"Wriggles," do you remember? When you see your nickname here, will you think of the years we lived together? It is long since I have seen your face, but I do not forget! When the stars hang out in the purple mist of a summer sunset, and the moon comes up over the S—— waters, I lean over the pier and think of you; I feel again the soft enclosing arm wrapt round me, and watch the little vessels, the white-winged yachts, swaying on the wavelets of the same brightness at which we used to gaze, and, from my heart, I thank you for the love you gave me so freely in those days!

"Still and proud," our little world called me, because I hid the hot, passionate, throbbings of my heart beneath the cold exterior of a haughty bearing and a set face; but you knew me better, did you not?

That first day! The remembrance of it is terrible to me! not the least of my troubles being the fact that Maggie was out of my arms. If I could have felt her soft face nestling itself against me I could have braved everything; but my arms were so empty! When should I carry her about in them again? The hopelessness of my position came upon me like a cloud. and as I crossed the shop into the office I saw nothing, heard nothing, excepting the murmur of voices and the rustle of the goods as they were unfolded before the various customers.

Mr. Harwood was not in the office when I entered it, but a youth of about sixteen rose up from his chair, and with a fearless freedom from affectation of that mannerism which some boys deem manly, he, in the most unembarrassed fashion, gave it to me, then remained leaning against the desk as he tried to enter into conversation.

Accepting the politeness which prompted his advances, I was giving him all the particulars of my journey, when his father came in, saying, "I see Fred and you are already beginning to know each other." Then laying his hand upon the fair-haired boy's head, he said, fondly, "This is our youngest, Miss da Costa, and a sad rogue you will find him, I am afraid."

"Is he worse than he looks?" I asked, with a playful tone in my voice, which would come to the

surface in spite of the trepidation I was feeling.

"No; do you think he could be that?" Mr. Harwood queried. "Does not his countenance tell you how bad he can be?"

"I shall like his wickedness if it answers his face," I answered, frankly, for it evinced a delicacy and refinement of feeling as great as any that I had ever seen upon the face of my compeers. Poor Fred! lovable Fred! what a champion I made in you by that speech!

"Now, my lad, be off out of this; you have idled long enough for one day. Mr. Matthews is waiting for you." And, ere his father had finished, the long legs of his boy were vanishing out of the office-door, but not until the owner of them had shot a kindly glance

of gratitude at me.

"I shall like him," was my mental comment as the last sound of his footsteps died away, for the brightness of his face had made the place seem less dreadful to me.

"Would you prefer to commence your duties at once?" asked my employer, returning to the business compact between us.

" Certainly."

He touched a call bell; in answer to its summons a young man brought in some invoices, upon which Mr. Harwood had previously been marking the retail prices "Bring the cashier's book, Jones," was of his goods. the command given: so a few minutes later I was being initiated into the mysteries of keeping a faithful account of the moneys entrusted to my care. "On this side of the book, beneath these numbers, you will enter all cash brought to you, and on the other side each amount that you pay out. I will try and make it plain to you. Every assistant has a number of her or his own: there are thirty-two in the establishment, thus the divisions of the book are marked from one to thirty-two. the duplicate of the bill, presented to you at the desk, you will always find the number of the assistant who served the goods, and the sum total received from his customer; this amount you place beneath the corresponding figure on your book, while he also keeps account at the end of the one from which he takes his bills; thus your book is checked by his, and vice versâ. At the end of the day you add up the sum total of moneys received from each number; he also adds up the amount in his books, which of course I expect, and which ought, to agree with yours. Do you understand?"

<sup>&</sup>quot;Yes."

<sup>&</sup>quot;Do you think you can manage it?" he asked, with a smile.

"I'll try my very best," I answered earnestly, with

the full purpose of doing so.

"You understand it is an absolute necessity that the books, and the cash, should always balance, as, in a large place like this, it is only by the non-balancing of them that we are able to detect dishonesty?"

Thus I was duly installed in my office, a desk, and a most uncomfortable stool, being the whole of its fur-

niture.

Oh, the weariness of the long, long, hours in which I sat receiving the moneys. How my head used to droop over the countless figures, while I wondered if ever the days would end.

From the very first I made myself enemies, through asking for a separate sitting-room, even while I had made two friends upon the first day of my arrival.

What hot, burning, tears I shed over my loneliness when I conceived, in all the magnitude of its desolation, how far I was removed from my kith and kin!

Pushing back my untasted supper, I looked around me for the purpose of fully recognising my new surroundings. It was a pretty room, with well-filled book-shelves ranged against the wall, and, wonder of wonders, a piano in it. When the servant came to remove the supper I asked, "Will you ask Mr. Harwood if he has any objection to my using the instrument?"

"I know he has not, miss. Miss Hamilton often

plays upon it," was the answer.

With a sense of relief I sat down; by its aid banishing the mortification and dissatisfaction out of my mind, while a sweet serenity dawned into its homesickness as the clear waves of harmony came swelling forth from the touch of my fingers, until they almost talked to me like a dear living friend. It grew dusk, the gloaming hour came, softly, as the prelude to night's reign. Still I played on.

"Comfort ye; comfort ye, my people," was +

wordless melody floating round me, then "O rest in Lord" followed in sweet succession. I closed the instrument, gently, as one would turn from the face of a dear comforter, and walked to the window; in this movement I passed the door of the room, and saw that I was not alone. There stood Fred Harwood, with folded arms and downcast eyes. I had not heard the slightest sound of his entrance, so, for the moment, my dominant feeling was that of annoyance. My lip involuntarily curled as the thought flashed over me: "This is but part of their plebeian creed! I am only their servant, upon whom they are at perfect liberty to intrude when, and in what fashion, they choose."

I was only his father's clerk, to whom the ordinary courtesies of life were unnecessary, I argued as the scorn grew in my heart. He lifted his head as I passed him, while, like one in a trance, he said, "Forgive me for coming in; I could not help it!"

The face that glanced into mine was so fair and boyish that the angry feelings died out of my heart as I looked into it, therefore I said, "You are welcome. I understood the music would not disturb any one, or

I should not have played."

"I wish you would never leave off," he said, "it makes me feel happier only to have heard you. My dad says I am music mad, but I cannot help it! Will you play again, just for a few moments, before we go into prayers? You know I have a small organ, and we always lead the singing with it; but I shall be afraid to play to-night after hearing you."

I sat down again at the piano, asking, as I did so, "Do you have prayers every evening?" I put it merely as a question which would cause him to leave

the subject of my musical accomplishments.

"Yes, and we have a hymn before dad reads the prayers. They all come in, and sometimes the singing goes so well that we have two or three. Papa and

Clem both sing; can you?" he queried, in the eager tones youth so often uses.

"Yes, a little."

"Do sing for me!"

My bright, bonnie, Fred, I often see you now as upon that night, the flush of ardour upon your face, and I am glad that I did not refuse you. Visions of Chrissie's face rose before me, memories of the last time we sang together, when my arms had been folded about the child Maggie whom I so passionately loved, until I felt how futile would be the attempt to sing any of the old songs. I commenced with one almost new to me, called, "The Waters of the Glen." Trickle, trickle, ran the pearly stream, dropping, dropping, the pure, clear, waters, until I sang as if by the very power of my will I called into existence new life; the melody died out, then with an effort I said, "I cannot do more this evening, I am tired; will you sing something for me?" I was a long time persuading him, but I was amply rewarded when I gained my point, for to this day, with the exception of Chrissie's, I have never heard a voice so purely, grandly, sweet as that of Fred Harwood's. It charmed me beyond measure with its clear, flexible, power, until I almost loved the lad because of this one great talent.

"I am so glad you have come to us," he said, as the bell for prayers rang through the house, while the boy's innate refinement made him add, "It will be

like having a sister."

"I am glad you think so," I answered, for his frank face had so won upon me, that I should have liked to kiss it. As a sister would feel the impulse to caress a brother, so did I feel towards Fred.

Before we could answer the summons to prayer, a knock came at the door, and Clemence Harwood entered with a word of apology for his intrusion: "I want that boy," he said, shaking his head at my companion. "He's a sad scapegrace, Miss da Costa;

we are waiting for him in the dining-room. It is time

for prayers."

Instinctively I knew that this lad was the best beloved of the household, and, as the time passed on, I ceased to wonder at the wealth of affection lavished

upon him.

As the two went out together I heard him say, "Isn't she a real stunner? Are you not glad she is come?" and as clearly did I hear the answer, "You had no business in there, Fred; you should keep your place. She may be a lady, but she is also our cashier." The words struck upon me as the icy waters of December, after the warm refreshing brightness of June's, happy, rippling, brooks.

"Our cashier!" the words never intended for my ears rang in them again and again, when Clemence Harwood would have cut out his tongue rather than utter them; but thoughtless words ever have the

subtlest sting!

Thus ended my first day in a business house.

# CHAPTER XX.

## FAIRLY LAUNCHED.

"Only I discern— Infinite passion and the pain Of finite hearts that yearn."

ROBERT BROWNING.

"This one thing I do," became my motto, when once I had shaken down into my proper position in the firm of Messrs. Selby, Harwood, and Co. In reality the whole of the business belonged to Mr. Harwood and his eldest son, Clemence; the deed of partnership between them having been duly signed and

attested only a few months before my entrance into their employ. Mr. Selby was a myth, as far as his present existence went; but many of the old hands remembered with a startling reality when his keen eyes had lighted upon every object which they were not intended to see. However, he had received orders to endure the inspection of far keener ones while he gave an account of his stewardship; he had "lain with his fathers" for so long a time that his oncedriven assistants had ceased to cringe, in abject humility, to his successor, for they had found out that, "eye-service" was not the service he demanded.

When he first took the reins of power into his own hands he had called his employés together, over a cozy supper, and made known to them the future rules and regulations in words both kindly and forcible. in that house I heard them repeated, many times, with fervent expressions of goodwill towards the master. He had said, "My men, I mean to trust you in things both great and small. I intend to study your interests, as I ask you to study mine. I shall treat you as men and friends, believing implicitly in your honour and honesty; feeling that in your hands I dare to leave the integrity and the upholding of this place." time I listened to the foreman as he used to tell how the assistants cheered; while he would look around with an appreciative nod to his audience, saying, "And I rather think he didn't make a mistake." found out that many of the hands had been in Mr. Harwood's service for a great number of years, yet none breathed a word against him. I am not going to hold up this establishment as a model one; but it was far above the average, simply and solely because the master of it counted himself a steward for God, as well as for his family.

I fell into the routine of business quickly, learning to check my accounts so that they almost always balanced.

At the same time, I determined to fit myself for the

office of a thorough clerk; thus I devoted my spare time to the acquisition of knowledge, in connection with the intricacies of dissection. With a brave heart and determined will I tried to glean a fair idea of the system of double-entry as pursued in the clerks' office; the entering and numbering of invoices, and the uses of bills and acceptances, with all the other varied mysteries of book-keeping. My efforts succeeded fairly. I became familiar with all the business routine, asking and receiving instruction with wonderful eagerness.

The evenings I spent in doing my literary work, often daunted in it, yet ever pursuing, working hardest when most discouraged. I read as I had never done before, seeking new ideas in everything; then as a relief from this, I used to sing myself into happy

quietude.

At first I saw very little of Mrs. Harwood, for she ever drew a fixed line between the position of herself and her servants—not the graceful one which a lady draws, so that its fineness makes it imperceptible excepting to those of her own class. She was a woman afraid to be her own true self; thus she could never be the thing which she aimed to become—a lady. only use this word in its conventional fashion, for it is one for which I have an utter contempt! Holding, as I do, the supreme dignity of the word womanhood in its noblest sense, my dictionary contains no grander Mrs. Harwood could one with which to crown it. never be this, because she was ambitious of worldly advancement as a thing far removed, in its dazzling splendour, from the common crowd; forgetful, poor woman, that it is only another name for a crown of thorns, or the misnomer given to the gnawing fox beneath a purple robe. Since those days I have learnt that a true woman is never ashamed of sympathising with her kind, no matter how blue her blood, or how tainted and common that of her fellows.

myself—a pitiful smile—as I think of the line of demarcation which we try to draw, so skilfully, 'twixt ourselves and common clay, and I ask myself, What shall we boasters do when we reach a land in which the aristocracy will be that of the soul only? of the valiant, faithful, hearts who press with undaunted courage to the goal, heedless of the bleeding feet or the dragging limbs, because Heaven's stamp of regality was upon them, dominating over every other claim to earth's nobility. How base and inglorious will our proud pretentiousness of spirit seem then! Yet this woman, who was without it, would almost have sold her soul—if it had been a marketable commodity—in exchange for the patrician blood that flowed in the veins of the noblesse, or even for the appearance of such well-born grace and ease as some of them possess. Failing to obtain these, she strove to imitate them in their ways, thus sinking her nobler powers in the one great effort which made her life an unbecoming, despicable, sham.

Knowing little of such characters, at that time, it took me some months to discover the motive power of her behaviour, but once possessing myself of the key to it, I read her as an open book, despising her accordingly.

She may not have been, in the abstract, an utterly bad woman, yet her weakness was so contemptible that my own training made me shrink from the evidences of it, almost as I would have done from those of a crime.

Disdainful and supercilious, she used to pass me with the ghost of a recognition, as if she were afraid of contaminating her loftiness of position with the lowliness of mine.

The indifferent coldness with which I used to return it nettled her pride, yet the unattractiveness of her bearing gave me a strange feeling of repugnance towards her, almost unconquerable. Suddenly it changed. Well do I remember the day she first It was one dull November evening, spoke to me. about four months after I had entered her husband's employ. It had been a gloomy, depressing, day, full of sad thoughts engendered by the dreariness of the weather; a misty denseness floated over everything, creeping in at the office door until it settled like a cloud upon my spirits. I had been summoned into the inner office to produce the balance-sheet or book of the week's trade done in each department, while Fred Harwood officiated as cashier in my stead. Intently engaged upon my work of calling over the various amounts, I did not notice Mrs. Harwood's entrance into the room, until her husband rose to put a chair for her. Then I bowed, while to my surprise she smiled most affably upon me, making some trivial remark respecting the weather.

I answered it, then quietly took up my next duty, entering the profits and losses as methodically and with as much self-possession as though she had not been sitting there coolly surveying me. That she had come in with a purpose, of some sort, to fulfil I was certain, so its disclosure being a matter of no moment to me, I awaited her pleasure. Mr. Harwood left us, then turning to me with a smile—oh, how well I learnt afterwards to know its false cruelty of expression!—she said, "Do you not find your life here very lonely, Miss da Costa?"

"Not particularly so," I answered, cautiously, for I was at a loss to find the reason of this sudden change of manner towards me.

"It does not seem natural that you should spend your evenings all alone and not feel dull," she persisted.

"I am too busy to feel very dull," I replied. "I felt it very much at first, but I am growing used to it now;" then a sudden thought striking me whether this was not at the root of her insinuating manner, I asked,

"Does my singing annoy you? I hope not!" while the thought flashed into my mind—she is going to cajole me out of my greatest solace; this is the secret of her altered demeanour.

But my fears were worse than the reality, for putting her soft, white, hands gently together, and assuming a most gracious expression of countenance, she said, "No! indeed no! I was going to ask you if you would join us in the drawing-room this evening, and let us hear your charming voice nearer than we can when you are singing in your own room. Will you? You have quite bewitched Fred; directly he hears you strike the first note, upon the piano, no power can detain him from coming to you. Indeed, we are getting quite jealous of your influence over him."

I felt my face flush beneath her scrutinising gaze, but I met it boldly and frankly, for I had naught to fear from her; so I made the truthful reply, "I hope you will not be that, for I like the boy, and I believe it makes him happy to sing with me, even as it makes

me less lonely when he joins me."

I more than liked, I loved, the lad; he was so generous, so open-hearted, yet so impressionable, that he was just the youth to need a mother's most careful, loving, guidance, or a sister's noblest influence, and I determined to be all to him that I could, because he lacked the latter's loving direction.

He used to sit in my room, upon the hearth-rug, the ruddy firelight playing upon his fair face and dancing over his curly hair, until I grew used to him and to the part I played as auditor to his confessions of weakness, or listened to the utterance of the dreams he had concerning the building up of his own life. His eyes would glisten and glow as we talked over the things which men could do or dare under God's guidance.

Well! it is all past, and gone, now! fled for ever yet to-day I see his face flushing and paling as we

spoke of the Scotch Covenanters, who dared to die so nobly for their faith; while his mouth quivered with the intensity of feeling aroused as he breathed the solemn wish, "Would God I could be as noble and brave."

Mrs. Harwood continued, "Will you join us this

evening?"

"Yes, if you wish it," I answered, mentally wondering why she had asked me. I was soon to solve the problem. She had scarcely left the office, when Clemence came in. His manner to me had never altered; he was rightly courteous, even while he was so coldly polite, that I almost dreaded meeting him.

"There are a very large number of circulars to go off, at once, by post, and I was wondering if you would help me in addressing them," he said, as he took his father's chair. Of course I expressed my willingness; so, much to Fred's annoyance, I remained helping to fold, and direct, the circulars so thoroughly affected by business men. We worked on in silence for nearly an hour, when Clemence Harwood, as if struck by a sudden thought, said, "Your name is an uncommon one, Miss da Costa?"

The way in which this remark was made constituted it a query, so I answered it as such. "Yes; I do not know any one who bears it in England excepting our

own family."

"Indeed; yet there are others, or at least there is one other, of the same name, for I knew him personally. We were always good friends; he was poor, but a thorough gentleman, and a most diligent student; in fact, he was in the same college. However, I believe he came in, most unexpectedly, for a fortune as well as a name. When I first knew him he called himself Alec Burchell."

"How strange," was the only comment I made, for the reserve in which he had previously wrapped himself made me very chary of telling him any part of my history; but he was pitiless in his questioning. "I suppose you do not know anything of him?"

"How should I?" I asked, as calmly and com-

posedly as possible.

"I do not know; I simply thought you might be distant relations."

Making no answer to this, I was yet conscious that he was looking at me, earnestly, as if he would read my very soul. I was piqued at his curiosity, yet fully determined not to gratify it, so I quietly proceeded with my work as though the idea of such relationship was unworthy of notice.

"You are vexed with me," he said at last; "yet I merely asked you because it struck me as a strange coincidence that you referred us to the rector of S——when entering upon your business engagements, and my friend's estate is called Elm Hollow and is situated

in the same parish."

"It is a coincidence," I remarked, looking him full in the face, "but one of which I was previously aware.

Alex da Costa is my cousin."

"Then you will shortly have the pleasure of seeing each other; he is coming here, this evening, to commence a visit long promised, and my mother tells me she has asked you to join us. She is under the impression that your singing will charm our guests."

I bit my lips, to keep back the sneer, as I said, "I do not purpose singing for the entertainment of your mother's guests, neither was I aware that it was with such a purpose, in view, her invitation was given."

"I do not believe it was," he promptly rejoined. "No such motive came into her mind. Fred is set upon your coming in with us, after business, because he thinks there is no one like you. My mother never denies him anything, especially a request likely to give us all so much pleasure as this one will afford when complied with."

This was the first attempt at a compliment that I

received from Clemence, so I valued it as a slight evidence that some day he would forget the fact that I was only his father's cashier.

"You will surely come in this evening?" he begged,

after another pause.

"Thank you; but I shall be glad if you will make my excuses to your mother, for I am not desirous of

meeting Alex da Costa in my altered position."

You should have seen his face as he turned to me! I believe my words gave his thoughts their new turn, for he burst forth, "By Jove! Surely you are not one of the girls who turned out when he took possession?"

"Yes."

"How shall I gain your pardon for my questioning? Believe me, I merely surmised that he might be a distant relative of yours." His face grew more like Fred's than I had ever seen it before, as he eagerly entreated me to forget how he had, against my will, discovered that Alex da Costa was my first cousin, and the usurper who took from me, nay from us, our dear old home.

"Yet is he not a splendid fellow?" he asked, when

I had done my best to set him at his ease.

"I know nothing of him," was the response, as the iciness of my tones betrayed how sore a subject he was.

"Do you not? He is a grand old fellow, plucky and brave, with a presence of mind almost unparalleled! I shall never forget a noble thing he did about a couple of years before he left Christ Church. It was just preceding the 'Long,' and there had been a few awfully hot days, while several rumours were afloat about certain mad dogs having the run of the neighbourhood of our college. We were coming down by St. Phillip's and St. James's Church, a merry, black-eyed youngster tripping before us, when, suddenly, a rabid dog indisputably proved the truth of

the report. It made straight for the child. second, ere I was aware of his intentions, Alex had interposed himself between them, and stretching out his arm to lift the child out of danger he received the dog's fangs in the wrist of his outreaching limb, while, with a powerful blow from his right fist—aimed straight at its head—he had laid the brute stunned at his feet. With marvellous rapidity a crowd gathered round, and the animal was despatched out of further mischief, while Alex had evidenced his coolness and courage by tightly bandaging the upper and lower parts of the bitten limb with his handkerchief. Then, with a fortitude rarely possessed, he set his own teeth firmly in the piece of flesh which had received the bite of the dog, and bit the whole surrounding portion of it out, then quietly walked off to the doctor to have the wound seen to. It was as cool and brave a thing as I have ever seen!"

"He suffered nothing from the after effects?" I

asked, for the story had interested me.

"No; but if you look at his left wrist this evening

you will see the scar."

And strangely enough I did not gainsay the fact that I should be there to see it.

### CHAPTER XX.

#### I MEET ALEX DA COSTA AGAIN.

"We are children! Children, it may be, of happy growth, yet ever children, holding on to the mysterious skirts of our younger fancies."

HAVING previously resolved that I would steel my heart against all old memories, I made my first appearance as a guest in the family of the Harwoods.

Alex da Costa had arrived some hours before I entered the drawing-room, and, I presume, Clemence Harwood had made him acquainted with the fact that I was living under the same roof, for he made no allusion to any feelings of surprise at meeting me in such a position, until some hours after my entrance, when we talked the matter over together as if we were old friends instead of such bitter enemies.

Several acquaintances of the Harwoods had dropped in, and as I had been introduced to them, severally, as a guest of their host and hostess, nothing occurred to wound my pride or to make me feel uneasy concerning my present position. They were all, with one single exception, persons of education, well bred, and used to socialities of a more refined class than I had anticipated; I took myself to task for the previous hard judgment I had passed upon people who held their position in society.

The next day I wrote to Chrissie, a full account of the manner in which I passed the evening, detailing my impressions concerning the visitors I met. As it is a truthful narrative of my first evening with the Harwoods, I have asked her to allow me to copy her

letter for these pages. I wrote:-

"My Dearest Chrissie,—In your last letter you say, 'Write of yourself; tell me everything about the town, about the Harwoods, and your associates, for I am so anxious to know if you are happy.' I obey

orders, and proceed to answer your questions.

"I will take the last one first, 'Are you happy?' Yes and no; I am happy, if you mean 'Are you quiet, are you free from old cares and anxieties?' I am well fed and clothed, and saving money! You will laugh when you read this, yet it is the truth; out of the amount I received as my quarter's salary I have actually saved two pounds ten shillings, which I am forwarding to you to make use of if you require it; if

not, to save towards the furnishing of our future home

should we ever come together again.

"I feel as if I could lay bare my heart to you, darling—let you be the priest of its confessional, then seek absolution from the same source; but there is so little to tell. 'Write of yourself,' is your mandate; I proceed to do so. I am sitting here, love, with the same mind, clothed upon with the identical body, in which you have so often beheld me, and yet I am changed. I ask myself, Am I the same? Can it be? The girl who scorned your love, the sneerer at your attempts to win my confidence; the child whose brief summer day so quickly slipped from her—am I the one? Then I ask myself, Shall I ever be quite happy again; glad as the birds are; free as the wind; rejoicing as I used, in the old days? while unhesitatingly I find the answer to my questioning, 'No.'

"The overweening estimate of myself I recall as a figment of my brain; its cause seems so far off that I can never glide back again to it; it is as though the angel of death had rolled his stone over it, leaving me naught but the memory of its still face. A stammering confusion of words comes upon me, with crushing force, when I try to speak of it, until by reason of their overwhelming interpretations I am glad to let them

slip away into the darkness of their tomb.

"With regard to my fellow employés—see, I write it exactly as it is, for I am a paid servant as well as they —I can only come to one conclusion,—they do not like me. Their generalities of conversation bore me beyond description, while my leanness of ideas, upon the usual topics they discuss, is a matter of amusement to them, or else the subject of their innuendoes and scorn. With one exception—Miss Hamilton; she is a girl I fail to understand, yet I almost love her. I know nearly every feeling that passes in her mind, because her face always betrays her. Her person is, in the extreme, lithe and graceful; her features good

and symmetrical; yet there is an indescribable attitude of reserve about her which I cannot fathom. I believe she is the sister of a physician who is practising in this town, but her reticence and reserve alone would prevent my asking her if such is really the case.

"Have I not answered all your questions faithfully? There is one more remaining. 'About the Harwoods?'

"There are four in family, Mr. and Mrs. H., also two sons, Clemence and Fred. The latter I like very much; he is such a combination of virtues and faults that a description of him would be almost impossible. Sometimes I think he is so volatile and fickle that no good can ever take deep root in his heart; then, again, I imagine him to be so pure and strong that the martyrs of old could hardly suffer by reason of comparison. Clemence is proud and ambitious. He hates the trade, yet sticks to it because of his father. I think it a mistake for men to send ambitious sons to our colleges, where they learn to despise their parents' calling, as Clemence Harwood so evidently does his father's; in spite of his haughtiness I like him. were to analyse my feelings I might find out that they were influenced by pique as much as by aught else, for he despises me because of my position in the office. and makes no effort to hide from others that such is the case.

"Yesterday a strange thing happened; Mrs. Harwood came into the office, and asked me to join them in the drawing-room after business hours. I consented, when, to my astonishment, Clemence Harwood afterwards informed me that Alex da Costa was coming here upon a visit of some days' duration, and would be with them that evening. For a length of time I was undecided as to the course I would take, my pride refusing to allow me to meet him as aught but an equal, while a forced sort of courage urged me to do so, and thus show that I was able to cope with the task of meeting our cousin in my employer's house.

When I entered the drawing-room, he was there. After I had been introduced to a Miss Bowers—of whom more anon—he rose to shake hands, but I fancy he held his out with a strange reluctance, as if he were half ashamed to claim even acquaintanceship with me. I took this blow to my pride as I had previously taken others, warding off its keenest pain by the thought that even his conduct could not hurt me in my pursuit of the means of gaining an honest living. I also thought of you, Chrissie, and was almost glad that you had not placed your happiness in his keeping, for he seemed so haughty and proud!

"The Harwoods dine late, so we sat sipping our tea, and chatting, until Fred caused a general movement amongst the company by entreating me to

sing.

"Annoyed at being made so conspicuous by his solicitations, I refused; however, the boy would not be thus abashed. Sinking gracefully upon one knee, he infused the comic element into his beseechings, as he cried, 'Just one song, Miss da Costa! Then I will be your servant for the rest of the evening.' Every eye was upon us, until I could hardly conceal my vexation as I answered, 'Do not be so silly, Fred,' adding, in a lower key, 'You are making me most uncomfortable.'

"'Shall I sing for you, my lad?' broke in Alex da Costa, as he came over to the sofa upon which I was sitting. 'You are really too hard upon my cousin; she has not yet finished her tea,' glancing at my cup. I gave my enemy a grateful look as he went towards the piano, accompanied by Mrs. Harwood and Fred. A moment later, and Burns' Bannockburn' was floating around us like a grand song of freedom, while I was at my ease again. Then he sang another Scottish song, which made me think of you. Chrissie, I wonder if you were his first love? I could not get rid of the idea during the whole time in which he was

singing, for there was more than music leading him on as he rendered the last verse of his second song—

"'Fare thee weel, thou first and fairest—
Fare thee weel, thou best and dearest;
Thine be ilka joy and treasure,
Peace, enjoyment, love, and pleasure!
Ae fond kiss, and then we sever—
Ae farewell, alas! for ever!
Deep in heart-wrung tears I pledge thee,
Warring sighs and groans I'll wage thee.'

"The whole execution of it was full of the finest harmony, as if he had poured out the very eloquence of music; it was like the expression of a burst of passionate love, coeval with an impulsive, ardent, nature, while a feeling of tenderness vibrated through every word of it. Scott said of this song, 'These exquisitely affecting stanzas contain the essence of a thousand love tales'; and I felt the truth of his words last night.

"After it was finished there arose an immediate call for another; but he had too much tact to monopolise the entire interest of the company, consequently he refused to sing again until some one else had done their part towards the entertainment of the assembled guests. Do you remember Miss Proctor's 'Doubting Heart'? I sang that as it is arranged to Ewan's music; and even while the words were upon my lips, I forgot to whom I sang them. When the notes broke the stillness—

"'Fair hope is dead; and light Is quenched in night'—

I thought only of you, wondering if, in Alex da Costa's case, the 'angel's silver voices' you loved would ever again 'stir the air.' They seemed to lie upon my heart, wrapped in purple state, and folded away like the experience of a human soul's first entrance into life, until I wondered if from this chrysalis a beauteous form might not yet have resurrection!

"After the singing we had a spirited game of bagatelle; followed up by whist and cribbage. I was fast growing weary when I caught my name uttered in

that half-tone so excessively disagreeable to the one upon whose ear it falls. This is what I heard—

"' Is she really your cousin?'

"'Yes.'

"'Not one fifty degrees removed?"

"'No; my first cousin; her father and mine were brothers."

"A prolonged 'Oh,' followed by the assertion, 'Who would have thought it?' was Miss Bowers' answer to Alex's careless remark.

"'Do you not see any likeness?' asked he, as he glanced down at her with an amused expression in his

eyes.

"'No; there may be the same colour in her eyes, and all that sort of thing, but she does not look a lady, you know.' Toying with her fan, and glancing archly at him, she went on, while the amused look deepened on his face—'I suppose it is not her fault, but she is only a sort of clerk to the Harwoods, so I imagine she finds herself out of place in their drawing-room. Mrs. Harwood asked her to come in because Fred was mad about it, and begged permission to invite her. I do not think she is really used to such society, so she must naturally feel herself out of place.'

"'Yes,' assented our cousin; 'Î do certainly believe that she is not used to it, nor has she mixed with such before.' This with a quizzical glance at the girl who was addressing him. 'Yet she sings well, does she

not?'

"'Yes; I suppose so'—this dubiously. 'But mamma says we never ought to put so much expres-

sion into our singing; it is so unladylike.'

"'Indeed.' There was a world of sarcasm in the fashion in which the one word was spoken, but Miss Bowers was either too conceited, or too dull, to see that such was the case. Then he quietly proceeded: 'Miss da Costa is a lady by birth as well as training; she was brought up in my present home, moved in good society as one of it; but this is the first time I

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have heard her conduct as a lady called into question. Elm Hollow was her birthplace, and its associations were hers when I was unaware of my rights to its possessorship; consequently her adaptability to the society in which she, at present, moves may not be so obviously shown as mine.'

"Chrissie, in my heart I was glad to hear Alex's outspoken confession, even while it pained me to hear him depreciate a Da Costa as he did in his own case. If I read that girl's character aright, I have made another enemy for myself, by not responding to the advances made by her when I first entered the Harwoods' drawing-room.

"Sometimes I wonder how I can bear all life's changes and believe that they happen for the best! Shall I ever learn to view them with a calm and tranquil mind?

"Shortly after this conversation took place, Alex came and sat down beside me, and we drifted into a chat respecting politics, social affections, and the notions of our day; these exhausted, we spoke of ourselves, of Philip, and of you. While so engaged, Clemence Harwood joined us, and, with the politeness characteristic of him, offered to show to us the conservatories adjoining the drawing-room; more than this, he fetched me a hood of his mother's, to put over my head, in order to shield me from the chilliness of the November fog and mist which might have crept in. We left the warmth for the cooler air of the conservatory, and there I realised, to some extent, Clemence's real character. He showed himself extentensively read, with a quickness of apprehension concerning a writer's salient points, combined with a ready sympathy and a sustained power of criticism such as I have rarely seen equalled, while his satirical delineations of character were as amusing as graphic.

"So, Chrissie, my dear, I forgot all about the past, and fairly entered into the present, until I was again left alone with Alex da Costa. For a few moments we

talked on without changing the subject; then we gradually left it behind as we touched upon nearer ones. I failed to remember my occupation as cashier, the opinions I held concerning our usurper, and we talked, freely, of the Hollow, a sadness hovering round us which would not be coerced, restricted, or flattered away; yet it was almost a sweet sadness, fraught with as much tenderness as sorrow. At last we touched upon my authorship. Alex broached the subject by saying, 'I saw a paper of yours a few days ago, and I was glad to see our name so honourably to the fore. Clemence Harwood sent the magazine to me, and somehow I had a presentiment that the article was from the pen of my cousin.' He looked at me, wistfully as he asked. 'Are you satisfied with your present life?' Even while his gaze was upon me I felt that the bitterness of death, as well as life, was in my answer as I queried, 'Is there such a thing as satisfaction?' while in the purple light I could see his eyes fixed upon me with a solemn meaning in them, too great to find expression in mere words.

"Satisfied! Oh, Chrissie, as if it were possible in this land of shifting thoughts, and fancies, when my failures were ever before me, and my successes nowhere to be seen; where the brightest fancies of my brain are ever imperfect, standing bodily before me in their black and white clothing, until I grow weary

by reason of their inartistic form.

"After concentrating my powers of thought upon one object, and then writing them out, with necessity goading me to its completion, I know little else but

failure, or at best a weak triumph.

"I cannot write more now, darling, but to-morrow I will tell you the remainder of our conversation. I am to spend this evening, also, with the Harwoods, therefore I shall not be able to finish my epistle without rising earlier, as I did this morning, to write to you. The clock is striking eight, so I must pack up my writing materials, and run downstairs to my breakfast

—a meal at which I shall look upon no familiar face, and hear no loved voice, because necessity knows no law, and thus compels me to live where your faces never visit me, excepting in dreams. Farewell, until to-morrow."

## CHAPTER XXII.

#### THE CONTINUATION OF THE LETTER.

"Every noble crown is, and on earth will ever be, a crown of thorns."—Carlyle.

"FOUR O'CLOCK A.M.—Now, I suppose, I must finish my letter to you. I think it is growing almost like a diary in its minuteness of description. I promised to tell you the remainder of our conversation, so I have wrapped myself up in my warm dressing-gown—the one you helped me to make—and will proceed to tell you, exactly, what transpired after Alex asked me the question concerning my satisfaction relative to my present prospects.

"When I queried if such a thing could really exist,

he answered 'Yes.'

"'I should like to meet a few persons who could agree with you; as a matter of personal experience attesting that so contented a state of mind is attainable.'

"'I could show you such,' he said.

"'Then they must be tame and placid by nature, without ambition, or desire, to achieve any great good in their lives, or else they would know the burden of dissatisfaction, or thirsting after an almost unattainable good."

"'No! I think you are wrong in your surmise; they are not without ambition, only, it is of the purer sort which is content to see its aspirations fail if God so wills it. They possess a satisfaction apart from all else, because they sink their personal ambition in a

spiritual one. Can I make my meaning plain to you by saying, They are ambitious for God's glory to take precedence of their own, therefore, the result of their toil, for it, must ever be a satisfying one, whether they have the visible fruits of it or not? "Excelsior" is their motto, but Christ is its crown, and as He is, ever, the Elder Brother of such, they are satisfied when they are found in Him, even though they do not always see the returning of the bread which they have cast upon the waters.'

"Chrissie, I listened in sheer astonishment, for Alex da Costa a Christian, was the thought most remote from my mind. I answered him, 'I was not speaking of the Christian's satisfaction, but that which accrues

to a man's personal being.'

"'You mean an existence apart from Christ?"

"' Yes.'

"'Then you are right. There is none; in such a

case the word is a very mockery.'

"'Yet why should it be?' I persisted. 'Is not man created an intellectual creature, whose very soul could be satisfied with the high training of his brain power; if only he had the necessary strength with which to keep up his pursuit after head-knowledge?'

"What do you mean by "power" in this in-

stance?

"'The power of health and the power of time,"

"'Do you think you can satisfy your heart by filling your head? They are two distinct members of your being; if you cut your finger, would you bind up your foot? True each influences the other, yet they need a separate care. Has your intellectual life ever eased your soul?' he asked, with much earnestness in his query.

"'It has quieted it,' I responded. 'When my heart has been sick I have turned to my work as a panacea against its weariness. I have trodden in the footsteps of the master minds of our literature until in their

grandest thoughts I have found rest.'

"'Yet I feel certain it has been a very transitory one. Not the great, full, respite from weariness which Christ gives to us. Your soul recoils upon itself, and the tired, unappeased, heart aches again with greater pain because you have given it a stimulant or a narcotic, instead of plain, wholesome, food. Can you fancy a mother quieting her hungry babe with gin instead of milk, then expecting it to thrive? There is a way of lulling the soul so that, after the respite, it only wakes to keener anguish than before.'

"'Do you think it wrong to be ambitious?' I asked,

desiring to turn the channel of conversation.

"'You cannot be too much so if only you are earnestly striving for a noble goal. There is such a thing as a sanctified, consecrated, ambition; a pure, beautiful, spirit of seeking to excel for the Master's sake. Christ Himself has taught that no man dare hide his light under a bushel. He says, "Let your light SHINE." We are His servants, and it is to His glory if they, who are of the household of the King, are found worthy to be there. Be ambitious of good, but lay your all at the feet of the One who gave to you your talent, for "the servant is not above his Lord."

"But supposing you desire to be great for your own sake?' I asked. 'What if you seek fame for

your own clothing, your own exaltation?'

"'Then, even if your wish is granted, it must be a crown of thorns; ere the goal is reached, they will have pierced you through and through. You leave your footsteps on the sands of time, but they are heavy by reason of the roughness of the paths through which you have trodden. There was a time when the thoughts of others burned into my soul, until I imagined it the knowledge of the very essence of life to be able to pen such; they were so heart-stirring; grand with the martial music of hands that had learnt to play skilfully upon the chords of life; pregnant with the echoes of man's noblest thoughts, yet now I know that the things which savour of spirit-life are vain—

without the great fundamental truth of Christ's love is

the Rock upon which they are built.'

"Just at this moment Miss Bowers came out into the conservatory, and with an affected start of surprise, at finding us there, she commenced chattering with Alex as if I were a person beneath her notice. not care for this: I was thinking of the words he had spoken, and mingling with them came the thought of the legacy the dying waif left me. 'Glory is Jesus Chrissie, shall I ever find it? In the midst Christ.' of my musings Miss Bowers began to talk about that new story of Arden's, and somehow or other I was drawn into the conversation, or rather argument. We looked at the story in an entirely different light—I with a full knowledge of the customs of our class; she with a superficial one gleaned from much novel reading.

"You remember the scene in the garden between Paul and Alice—where they part with the understanding that they each have too little affection for one another, and too much mutual respect to allow them to enter into wedded life without love's blessing? You will call to mind the tender, parting, kiss they exchanged? Miss Bowers affirmed that the story was wholly improbable, that its incidents were an impossi-

bility, and its plot a failure.

"I argued warmly in favour of its truthful delineation of life, until we were, both, thoroughly roused to the conflicting warfare of opinions, while, with much warmth, we debated the several points in question. I told you, darling, that I would make your heart the altar of my confessional, so now I must tell you of my shortcomings; I positively lost my temper. The girl was underbred and self-opinionated, shallow in her arguments, yet persisting in them with a fervour undeniable. At length, in the heat of the moment, I said, 'You think such a thing a fiction, Miss Bowers, but by my own experience, I know that a girl can bestow such a kiss.' I was thinking of Philip.

"'Oh, you have a little love story in the background,' she sneered; 'pray inform us how it ended.'

"' As a true woman's ever does,' I said with dignity;

'it was hidden in my heart.'

"'Like a skeleton, I presume. Do you ever hear its bones rattle?' She laughed, but there was a taunt in the very ring of her voice, as if she had some motive

for stirring my anger.

"I was fairly roused, so I answered, If I did, I should not give my confidence, concerning it, to any person with whom such an act of friendship would be misplaced." Then I quietly walked back into the drawing-room, leaving her outside with Alex. He made a movement to join me, but I said I would rather go in alone; as I made this assertion our eyes met, and I knew that he had rightly read Miss Bowers' character.

"During the remainder of the evening he did not come near me, but Clemence was exceedingly kind; so were both Mr. and Mrs. Harwood. I am altering my opinion concerning the latter, and I think I shall

yet learn to like her.

"I believe I have told you all, dearie, excepting one Yesterday evening I again went into the drawing-room, and Alex and I had a little talk about the assistants. He thinks I am wrong not to mingle more freely with them; he says it is to my own hurt not to do so, for they may teach me many things necessary to learn during life's journey. I think he is right in this, although he was a long time trying to persuade me into the belief before I yielded to his convictions. He argues that life is always made richer and happier by self-denial, and he believes I shall find my reward if I once break down the feelings of pride which I have raised as a barrier between us. As he puts it, there are thirty-two men and women in the establishment, amongst whom there must be some who have kindly, generous, hearts, worthy of the search after a knowledge of them. So, I am going to strive to become one of their party, instead of isolating myself from them.

"Give my Maggie a thousand kisses for me! the child! She is never out of my thoughts. I am off to business again, so shall cheer myself up with the thought that soon this missive will be in your hands, and then you will know something of the influences round about me."

The days passed on, each one dragging less slowly, for my time was fully taken up; I was beginning to nurse a thankful mood, when a strange thing happened

in reference to my accounts.

To explain the weight of care it became to me, I must make you acquainted with another member of our household. The head clerk, Mr. Holden, Mr. Harwood, Fred, and I, were the only ones who ever entered the cashier's desk, or office, and upon us devolved the duties of paying, and receiving, all moneys. It sometimes happened that the cash was short, therefore the books would not balance, yet, during the course of the day, one of the four would recall some payment made, the entry of which had been forgotten, thus the mistake was made plain and rectified. The amounts received and paid were often very large, so that it was a matter of honour with us to be very particular in our

The clerk, Mr. Holden, was allowed free access to the desk, so that he could enter it at any time without questioning. Fred's case was the same, and up to the time of which I write most of the mistakes had proved to be of his causing, but now each day found the cash short and the error undiscoverable. Mr. Harwood called me into the office one morning and told me that he had been adding up the amounts short, during the past fortnight, and that they amounted to nearly sixteen pounds. He spoke kindly, but firmly, saying that the fault must be mine or Fred's, as Mr. Holden was an exceedingly careful and correct man, while he, himself, rarely entered the desk at all until the evening.

He said he had spoken to Fred and advised him to be more particular, so that he hoped between us we should

be able to manage to show a better balance.

A few minutes later, Fred came into the desk, with a most rueful look upon his face, saying, "Miss da Costa, do you really think I am so careless? The governor has been lecturing me; he says he believes I am the cause of their being unable to balance the books. You don't, do you?"

"Yes, Fred, I do. I am most careful in making my entries, yet with one result, our cash does not balance,"

was my answer.

"So am I careful," persisted Fred. "I was only in the desk three times yesterday, excepting when you were at dinner, and then no bills came in. I gave old Smith twopence for the carriage of an empty box, and I could swear that was every farthing I paid out."

I smiled at the lad's earnestness, but still I believed him at fault, so I said, "Next time you have to pay the carriage, of so trivial a thing, do not pay a couple of pounds for it. Meantime try and puzzle your brains about the missing money, you may remember some-

thing."

The next day the cash was five pounds three shillings over. I saw that Mr. Harwood was much annoyed; all the assistants' books agreed with mine, so no amount of time expended in calling them over could bring to light the cause of the overplus. This time I was positive the mistake was none of mine, for the evening before I had counted the receipt stamps in my drawer, and to, exactly, the number I had used corresponding entries of accounts paid in were found, in my handwriting, upon the pages of the cash-book.

It was strange. Wherever the money had come from it was evident no stamps for its acknowledgment had been taken out of the cashier's desk. Strangely enough, we never once thought of the stamps in the clerk's office. It was evident some one had paid a small account, but the question was who, also by whom

had it been received. Mr. Holden stated that for all the amounts he had taken he had given me a ticket, for entry, therefore, the mistake could not be his. The mystery remained an unsolved one, and we came to the conclusion that, after next quarter-day, some irate customer would make complaint, concerning his bill

having been sent in a second time.

This sort of thing went on until Mr. Harwood's patience was almost worn out; yet he did not once speak unkindly to me concerning it. Alex da Costa still stayed in the house, and I believe he was the only inmate who was not aware of the almost regular deficiencies of the cash-drawer. The assistants began to look askance at me, and my overtures of friendship were disregarded by them, or else openly rejected. They talked the matter over together, and by the sudden cessation in their chat, whenever I happened to come amongst them, showed that I was the topic of conversation.

It became almost unendurable, so at last I asked Fred, as an especial favour, to keep away from the desk excepting during meal-times. I even gave up my hour allowed for dressing in the morning, yet ever with the same result. The amount of money, found in the drawers, was always smaller, or larger, than it ought to have been. Mr. Harwood began to look grave; finally he told me that he was sorry I found it impossible to properly fall in with my duties, and he was afraid a change would be necessary. In plain language, this meant that I should again have to seek other work.

Fred was in despair. He murmured against his father's decree, yet had no power to alter it. As for me, I was growing literally sick of the hand-to-hand struggle which my life was becoming. More than this, the whispers of the assistants grew into something worse; still there was nothing in their bearing of which I could take hold, or concerning which I could make complaint.

Beside, there ever existed one fact, patent to all, the

money could not be accounted for, therefore, I must be either careless or a *thief*.

I was in an agony, but the darkest hour was yet to come.

## CHAPTER XXIII.

### THE MYSTERY.

THE only person in the establishment who thoroughly took his stand upon my side was the manager, or foreman, of the mantle department, and his reason for so doing was he suspected another person of the theft.

Just at this time there occurred a long spell of wet weather; dull, dark, dreary, days such as tradesmen learn to dread as a harbinger of empty seats at their counters, and unemployed hands behind them. There seemed no cessation from the continual downpour, no break in the darkness of the low-hanging clouds. "Like my life," I used sententiously to say to myself, "I am sick of it all; I wish I had never been born. I am ready to work; willing to put forth all my strength to conquer the difficulties of my lot, and what is the result?"

Ah, what was it? A dreadful present and a fearful future. I was oppressed with the burden of living. The very air was "dark with anguish," until I was appalled with its blackness. My familiar companion was "sorrow," and yet I was ever craving something to lighten its burden.

When we are reduced to the necessity of counting the pounds we earn as the breath of our existence, life becomes strangely real. This was my case. If I lost my work, I also lost my bread, my roof, my clothing, and all this through no fault of my own. I was careful over every amount paid in at my desk, but they were, during those dull November and December days, so few that my books always balanced.

"You see things are looking better," Mr. Harwood said, cheerfully, as we balanced for four weeks without the mistake of a halfpenny. "It will only need greater care when we are busier; you must try and observe every penny paid to you, also all amounts which you pay out, and then, I think, we shall be able to manage together."

"I have tried to be careful," I answered; "also I possess a good memory, but these repeated mistakes

baffle it. I do not believe I am to blame."

"You think Fred ought to be more careful?" he

queried.

"Yes." This was said reluctantly, for I knew the sensitiveness of the boy's nature, therefore I did not like to blame him to his father.

"You understand me, Miss da Costa, I do not wish you to leave us. Fred says that you are talking of going away, but I cannot see the necessity for that; I only desire that care should be shown in the keeping of the accounts."

My nervousness was apparent, as I answered, "I shall be only too glad to stay, if this darkness lifts itself; but I am worn out with my present pain. I live in a state of tortured dread; not of the fruit of my own actions, but of that of others. I am weary with the everlasting attempts I make to keep my life open and pure to all, while everything I attempt fails, until I am sick of the strife. Even the assistants look askance at me, as if I had stolen the money."

"Nonsense; that must be merely a fancy of yours. Of course it is very awkward when the books will not balance; yet I have never for a moment suspected you of aught but carelessness. Systematic attention to each little detail must ensure a successful whole."

"The books always balance now," I answered, "but

I quite dread the busy time, coming."

My fears proved well founded, for, again, my cash account literally refused to come straight, and I was at my wits' end.

Mr. Holden also openly sneered at my ineffectual attempts to present a perfect balance-sheet, and was

unsparing in his hints and innuendoes.

Many and many a night I tossed restlessly upon my pillow trying to fathom the secret of my lacking cash; as often have I risen in the morning, pale, weary, and dispirited, with a heart so heavy that its weight almost robbed me of the strength I needed for the routine of business.

Mr. Harwood's patience and forbearance were marvellous; I wondered at the exhibition of those virtues, even then, when I knew so little of business and the ways of men engaged in it; now I know that, with far less cause for suspicion, many an employer would have turned me from his doors without home and character. Day by day, as I see more of life my wonder at its tide of destitute, characterless, ones grows less, for I know how easy it is to judge and condemn another even where no real sin exists.

"If only I had some one to help me," was the cry of my soul. Some heart into which I could pour out the whole tide of anguish that is overwhelming me, then perhaps its pain would be more endurable. I was looking too much on the dark side of life, yet seeing no meaning in the afflictions God was sending me.

Mr. Holden ever made my cross heavier; with the pertinacity of a little soul, he let pass no opportunity of reminding me of my business shortcomings, until I almost loathed the returning light of day, because it brought with it fresh trials, and petty taunts, almost

maddening.

I never like to think much of this man, and it is an especially painful task to write the portion of my history, with which he has to do. He was a professed Christian, a Sunday-school teacher, and a local preacher, yet, while he taught, he forgot to live Christ.

I see a smile cross some reader's face! I almost hear you say, "Just so; these Christians are ever the most bitter enemies;" and once, before I entered into a fuller knowledge of Christ's love, I, too, could have joined in your assertion. Now it is not so; I only say that these base imitators of our noble, exalted, religion, of which the Divine man was the pattern, are mere mockeries and delusions to be avoided and spurned, but never to be placed upon a pedestal by which you shall judge all men.

These were my days of shadows; so dense were they that the retrospect is appalling; if no inner light of future revealings threw their brightness on these pages, I could not write of the past. I used to wring my hands, crying aloud, in the agony of my impatience to find out the source of my misery, for a great fear was

dawning in my heart that Fred was a thief.

No amount of carefulness, no tireless sticking to business, altered the position of affairs. It wounded me cruelly when this thought first found entrance into my mind, but I could not reject the idea. In the absence of direct proof, I could say nothing to him concerning the opinions I had formed; yet I dreaded his companionship as a thing too painful to be borne. When he came into my sitting-room and found me bending listlessly over the fire, he would entreat me to play for him, or sing, but I could not. His fair, open, face seemed to me only a rarer covering for deceit than nature often finds.

The idea grew upon me, so one day I marked a lot of the money, and waited to see the result of my deed. That evening the cash was twelve shillings short!

I went up to my bed-room, and crouching down upon the floor, I sobbed, great heartbreaking sobs of pain. Duty had stimulated me to learn my new tasks, but I shuddered when I thought of the fashion in which I should leave them behind, if once I turned my back upon the office of Mr. Harwood. Yet my resolve was taken; I would ask an interview of him, and

then state my determination to leave the house at the

expiration of the month.

Drying my eyes, I went downstairs and told him how, apparently, useless were my endeavours to do my work as it ought to be done, and, therefore, I had

resolved to leave it, and try something else.

Mrs. Harwood was in the room; to my surprise she answered, instead of her husband, saying, "I am disappointed in you, Miss da Costa! I took you for a brave-hearted woman, yet you are flinching at the first touch of trouble, and running away from it. What do you really believe to be the cause of the deficiency?" she asked, putting her hand caressingly upon my shoulder. I was moved with this mark of her friendship, but I had no answer ready to the question.

"Sit down," she proceeded, as she drew a low chair into the warmth of the blazing fire. "There, tell me how it is that these stupid books won't come

right."

I could not look in her face, I was so embarrassed with the turn my thoughts had recently taken, so I sat interlacing my fingers, conscious that her eyes were upon me, yet utterly unable to raise mine to them.

If I had used the words which were burning in my heart, I should have said, "I believe your son, Fred,

takes it," so nothing but silence could ensue.

Her eyes were still reading my countenance as she resumed, "I do not think your carelessness is to blame, because a thing non-existent cannot be the cause of an effect, and I believe you are careful in business as you are in your habits and dress, and therefore, we must look elsewhere for the source of your trouble."

Still I dared not speak, my heart was too full. The fire sang a low song, and the mischievous ashes dropped their whiteness upon the fresh-swept hearth, while the dancing light glanced upon the quaintly-carved chairs of the dining-room, until they all seemed

to move round me as things do in our dreams, yet I

possessed no power with which to answer.

"I will leave you and Miss da Costa to talk the matter over, my dear, and perhaps with your women's wit you may think of some clue to this mystery," interrupted Mr. Harwood.

As he closed the door after him, she drew her chair quite close to the fender, and putting her feet upon it, she sat silent for a few moments, then asked, "Do

you think the money is stolen?"

A low "Yes" was the only answer I could make.

"So do I," she emphatically said; "I have thought so for some time past, but it will be a difficult matter to discover—as a certainty—if such is the case." She laid her white, shapely, hand upon mine as she made this remark, and as the fire-light gleamed upon its beautiful whiteness I looked at it, approvingly, as one would view a beautiful piece of sculpture. Even while my thoughts were still busy with the monetary trouble. my preoccupation of mind could not shut my eyes to its loveliness, yet its tender touch was the very thing needed to make me keep my belief in Fred's guilt hidden in my own heart. She was his mother; the blow falling upon him must strike her also, therefore my tongue was spell-bound by the comforting thought of her entire belief in my innocence, as well as by the fact that Fred was her idol.

"You have no idea who is the thief?" she queried.

My answer was given with a strong purpose rising in my heart that by no word or look would I point at the real culprit, so I said, "If I have an idea I have no proof as to the correctness of my surmise, therefore, I would rather not say."

"You are right; we must get the proofs before we

use the name. Your caution is justifiable."

Then we talked of one or two other business matters, insensibly gliding away from them into more personal talk.

Every girlish idea of happiness had vanished, stern

reality was ever marking out my path, yet still I craved the token of some human affection or I should never have poured out my love at such a shrine, as that upon which I offered the first oblation, as we two sat side by side, in the flickering light of the fire.

Alex da Costa had gone home, Clemence had accompanied him, so no interruption ensued until Fred came in from the singing-class of the Philharmonic Society. I heard his step upon the stairs, and rose to go, when Mrs. Harwood put her hand into

mine and kissed me.

It was the kiss of a Judas; the means she used to win me to herself—for motives of her own; but my life was then so empty of all evidences of love, that it lured me into her power with cords of strongest binding, until they, at last, cut into my very soul as I strove to break them.

I have often thought since that evening how easily my pre-conceived notions were set at defiance in the case of this woman, by the very artfulness of her behaviour. I was open to no influences but those of love, consequently she touched the right chord, when she, by her kiss, evidenced affection towards me. The mystery of life has harmonised these details, or I could not so freely write of them.

An hour later Fred was in my sitting-room, entreating me to try over a new air for him. His pleasant, happy expression angered me; for, I argued, he was the guilty one, I the sufferer. I am looking at his face now—nay, not at his face, only the mere copy of it, as artists copy the sun—framed in its pretty gilded bright-

ness, and I wonder-

This has nothing to do with my story. Let me tell

you the circumstances of that night.

His fair hair was brushed off from his forehead, as if an impatient hand had been busy with its wealth; his collar was awry; his cuffs crumpled, and his beautiful, boyish, profile almost a picture as he stood before me asking the interpretation of the music he held in his hand. I loved the boy as he began in his persuasive tones, "Do not say 'No' to-night, Miss da Costa! I want it so much, and the piece is splendid! I'll hum over the tenor part, and you'll see for yourself."

His eager, beautiful, face only added to my pain, but I tried to hide it from him, even while I wondered how

he could be so joyous yet so guilty.

With assumed carelessness I sat down to the piano, and tried over the part he wished, but the mechanical way in which the task was performed annoyed him, so he, half laughingly, half seriously, said, "Let me show you the real meaning of the passage."

I moved from my seat while he poured out his soul

in the harmony I had failed in reaching.

Woman-like, I could not bear the uncertainty any longer; therefore, with startling abruptness, I began, "I want you to do something for me, Fred."

"Anything short of murder, or suicide," was his answer, as he turned himself round upon the music-

stool and faced me.

"It is nothing so dreadful," I said, with a short laugh; "I only want change of this; I wish to pay my laundress."

"At half-past 10 p.m.," he laughingly retorted. "She must be a late bird; or is she coming to sue you by morning light,' like Guy's valet?"

My heart was beating so fast that it almost stifled

me as he proceeded to turn out his pockets.

"Two shillings, one half-crown, a florin, and five sixpences, the whole of my worldly possessions!" he avowed, as he spread them out before me. "I was a shilling or two richer when I went out, but, if you like to take these in exchange for your sovereign, you are welcome."

My purpose was answered! There, before me, lay one of the identical half-crowns I had marked.

### CHAPTER XXIV.

#### A GREAT SIN.

"If thou faint in the day of adversity thy strength is small."

I was hurt to my very soul; nothing stings so terribly as the guilt of those we have loved, or even liked.

Fred is guilty!

I said it over, again and again, to myself that night, when I stood, as I thought, looking upon the proofs of his theft. Yet I had not planned any course of action; so in a hard, metallic, voice I answered his laughing banter, for it seemed as if his sin, or rather the knowledge of it, had changed my whole nature.

Just for a moment I stood there, looking at his fair, open, face, then with a rush of sudden anguish I understood the feelings prompting the cry, "Oh Absalom,

my son, my son!"

It was the crime that fixed so dreadful a gulf between us! I felt as if a life-time of pain and doubt were concentrating their bitterness in the passing moments. I put my hand between the light and my eyes, as if to shut out from my view the fact which would array itself before me with startling plainness. I had so heartily loved this boy that it hurt me as few things beside could have power to do. I wish to heaven I had there and then told him of my suspicions; but I did not.

How much of our sorrow lies in the carrying out the ideas prompted by our fancied wisdom. My resolve was taken, I would wait; wait for the morrow's clearer view; I would think everything over during the night, and act accordingly. I scarcely know how the next hour went, until the bell rang for prayers; I was no hypocrite, and my feelings towards Fred were so badly concealed, that momentarily I anticipated his question-

ing voice seeking to discover the reason of my altered tones and behaviour.

The bell rang for prayers, and Fred rose from the hearthrug with, I fancied, a sigh of relief, saying as he did so, "Prayers; I am going to ask the Pater to have 'At even, ere the sun was set,' he proceeded; "you call it one of your favourites, do you not?"

"Yes," I answered, reluctantly; making no movement towards the door, which he was holding open.

"Are you not coming?" he questioned.

"Not to-night; my head aches frightfully," I just managed to articulate, for I was almost choking with the strong repression of feeling with which I was exercising myself.

In a moment the door was closed again, and the impulsive, loving, boy was at my side. "What a brute I must seem to you!" he said; "here I've been talking to you for nearly an hour, yet I never once noticed how white you were looking. Forgive me, dear Miss

da Costa; I am so sorry!"

Then he was gone, but only to return with a glass of wine, which he urged me to drink. I refused, almost rudely, pushing it away from me, yet even then half sorry for the look of hurt kindness on his face. Evading all his questioning, I went up to my bedroom, and sweeping back the curtains from the window, I laid my hot, fevered, face against the coolness of its panes, while I strove to contemplate the circumstances which were hemming me in. My brain throbbed with the intensity of its varied thoughts until I hardly knew how to disencumber them of the pain.

I think that night was one of the marks set up in the roadside of our individual lives, at which we look back, after youth's bloom has entirely gone, and say, "Upon such a day I passed the Rubicon." By this I do not by any means intend to convey the idea of physical youth, but mental. The time had come for me to fight out the battle, for myself, of tortured unbelief, of spiritual mysticism; when doubts of men are our

lesser ones, and fears of God's wisdom and truth grow fast and rank as the deadly nightshade.

Looking out upon the night I thought of the statement made by another suffering one—

> "The sweetest stars are made to pass O'er the face of the darkest night;"

Echoing her thrilling after statement,

"But we-Oh God, we have no stars!"

The wind outside moaned, and gasped, like a living suffering thing, blending its weirdness with the aching desolation of my heart, until a bright gleam shot itself athwart the darkness, in the thought, "I will write and tell Chrissie everything."

At this moment Miss Hamilton came into the room; I turned to my desk and commenced writing. How best to break it to her was the idea uppermost in my mind, so that she should still be unaware of the constant pain which had filled my heart latterly.

I wrote letter after letter, but my utmost painstaking could not hide from her the bitterness of suffering which I was enduring. The facts stood out so glaringly when written; they seemed so bare, so dreadful. At last two or three hours had elapsed, and my letter was still in its embryo state, for each separate one had received a like fate, as I tore up their contents, until quite a little heap of fragments lay at my feet. "It is of no use," I pondered, as I buried my face in my hands, "I cannot write to her. God is very hard and cruel to us. Just when things are looking a little brighter and better the darkness comes over again. We have been willing to do everything for an honest living; we have striven against the tide until I, for one, can do battle with it no longer. Let it go." "I should be glad to lie down and die," I said to myself, with a dull, concentrated, despair, infinitely more pitiable than my previous outbursts of pain had been.

Glad to die! Yes, it had really come to this;

looking the facts of life full in the face, I asked no better thing than to leave it behind for ever! Dare I tell you what foolish notions came into my mind that night? I wondered if God would punish me for ever if I took the matter of life and death into my own hands; facing the cold, dense, darkness of the latter, instead of enduring the hard, fierce, battle of the former.

I fancied Fred's remorse when he saw the fruit of his crime, for I could call his sin by no lesser name. Then I told myself that in a few moments I could eat of the tree of knowledge; know, for myself, the end of things; see God's justice, and His judgment; grasp, once for all, the great reality of the spiritual world! "I can but die once!" I told myself. I shall never be able to stand in the continual fight of life. With youth and vigour I cannot make my way, what shall I do when old age creeps on?

Death began to allure me; it danced before my eyes in its most fascinating guise. "Perhaps God will punish me for a little while," I told my soul. "Then He will forgive me and let me into another happier world; if He knows anything He must know how miserable I am; how utterly impossible life is becoming to me."

The sophisms I used grew upon my soul, with an opiate-like power; my better nature slept and the cowardly one reigned.

I put out my light and stood again at the window. Miss Hamilton's calm breathing betokening her asleep.

Great drifts of blackness came sweeping over the sky; heavier, and heavier, grew the night; then the rain began its incessant driving against the window; with a sobbing, wild, cry from the wind, it came like nature's great tears, while I, watching it, wept also with a convulsive passion of sorrow so great that I was almost exhausted with its anguish. Of this portion of my life I can only say that I do not give it "as a pattern to imitate, but an example to deter."

I verily believe I was mad; softly stealing down the stairs I unbolted and unbarred the door, and went out under the cold winter sky with the fixed intention in my mind of destroying myself. Life had been so hard that death seemed a boon. How could I escape from the snares around me but by its means? denounced Fred the thief was capable of being the liar also; if I did not I must go out of the establishment without a character.

I have a vivid recollection of the way in which I crept down the long passage with frightened steps as the boards creaked, beneath my weight, in the fashion they have during the quietude of the night. I also remember how obstinately the bars persisted in remaining in their sockets, and with what a startling noise the bolt shot back as if it, in its inanimateness, derided and mocked at my very efforts. At last I was fairly outside, the terrible rain beating down upon me, the wind shrieking at me, the very sky frowning over me, and I was going, in that wild winter morning, to my—Death.

The wind took my hair, blowing it in wild defiance over my face; it pierced through my garments, and drew them round me with chill persistency, as if aiding the rain in a mighty effort to keep their

dripping wetness clinging round me.

I knew my destination, and I made a heart-breaking prayer as I went towards it. I believe it was something after this fashion—or else I dreamt that I made it in the delirium of my madness—"Oh God, I am so tired; so tired. I wouldn't do it if I could help it, but I am so tired of it all. I have no rest; it is always so hard and I am, very, weary."

I reached the mill, and, as I imagined, sat down for the last time upon its bridge, while the town clock clanged out the hour of five. Why did visions of my father's eyes come to me? Why did I see the little army of dead faces which Moey, Chrissie, and I had

covered up? I do not know.

I drew a long breath as they passed in review, then, high over the roar of the lashing waters, far above the beating, drenching, rain, I heard a child's voice; it came to me as plainly as I hear the voices of my household friends to-day; it moved over my burdened soul like oil upon troubled waters, "Glory is Jesus Christ; I loves glory."

I crouched down upon the old bridge as I felt the little, restless, hand of its utterer in mine, and before his pure gaze my soul stood abashed at its contem-

plated deed.

"I hate life, yet I dare not die," I cried, as the frenzy of my suffering mingled its cry with the mad

howlings of the tempest.

A rough hand was upon my shoulder, and while I shuddered at its touch a hearty, cheerful, voice broke in upon my madness, "Come, come, you have no business here this time of the morning."

I made no movement, letting my face still rest in my hands. Why should I show its utter misery to

any one else?

"My girl, what's the matter?"

Still I made no answer, only crouching closer to the rotten railings of the bridge, as I heard the questioner let down his basket of tools from off his shoulder with a clatter as if noise were a necessary element in his life. Then he tried to move my hands, until, with a gesture of utter despair, I lifted my face from them, and looked straight into his.

I do not know what he read in mine, but the compassionate mercy of a kindly heart filled his to overflowing, for asking no questions, whether I was poor or rich, he only took in the fact that I was wretched

and miserable.

I do not remember all the after incidents, until I was gulping down some warm tea out of a workman's breakfast-can, then, leaning on his arm, going to his home.

"Martha, Martha!" His voice sounded a long

way off, still I heard it. "Come down, here's a lassie wants you."

Then with a cheery "I must be off, work waits for no man," ran upstairs to his wife, said something to her, then returned to me, opened the outer door, took out the key from the inner side, locked it as he went, leaving me a prisoner. Drearily I saw the whole, yet at that moment failed to understand it.

He knew my secret of intended self-destruction, and

was afraid to trust me.

## CHAPTER XXV.

### AN ANONYMOUS LETTER.

"It is a dreary thing when much of life seems still before us, and a dark, unfathomable future lies between us and the grave. It is a bitter thing to sit alone and ponder on the days to come, and discover no bright spot in the darkness."—F. E. SMEDLEY.

Of the kindness shown to me by that labourer's wife I can never fully write; she was a young thing with a warm, kindly, heart, and she evidently thought I was an object for her sympathy, although she lifted up her hands in horror at the thought of the sinful deed I had contemplated.

"Dear heart," she exclaimed, as she bustled about, drying my things; "what made you think of it?"

"I was so tired of it all," I reiterated. "So tired."

"Ay, but thee must have been sore troubled," she said, rubbing my hair between the coarse texture of a

kitchen towel, "to think of such a thing."

"I was, I am!" I cried, as I looked up at her; "but do not ask me the reason, for I cannot tell it to you! I am wicked, wicked! but I will promise you, faithfully, never to attempt such a thing again if you will let me go now. They will miss me."

"Miss you? Then you have friends?"

"No; not where I am going," I answered, looking wildly round. "Only I must go back at once," I pleaded. "I will come to you again when I am

happier, if ever I am."

If I did not get away soon, the assistants would know, or guess, the rash deed-from which an outstretched hand had saved me—I had so nearly committed. At last the woman yielded to my entreaties, and I bound up my wet hair, put on my chill, clinging, garments, then started for the house from which I had noiselessly stolen a few hours before. I reached it before the porters were stirring, for the door was exactly as I had left it; its ponderousness causing the fury of the wind to leave it unmoved. Entering, I slipped the bolts, put up the bar and chain, then trod the long passage as I had done so short a time before, with the same creaking result. Every sound seemed literally to vibrate on my brain, as if it were the centre of a thousand nerves. But I managed to get into my bedroom without disturbing any of the inmates of the house, saving Miss Hamilton.

The wintry dawn was just beginning to struggle in when I returned, and she was procuring a light, for the

sound of my footsteps had roused her from sleep.

"Miss da Costa! What is it?" she asked, with eager, dilated, eyes, and a white, scared, face, from which fright had driven every vestige of colour. "You are wet! drenched! and——" I stood nerveless as she ceased speaking. I think she was almost powerless, through sheer astonishment, to finish her sentence.

"I am cold, too," I said; merely to put in a word and thus give myself breathing time to collect my scattered senses and think whether I should take her into my confidence or not;—if I should tell her that life was too hard for me; that, hating it, I sought to throw it back in my Creator's face and dare the worst possibilities of death.

Oh! she was rarely womanly and tender, this girl

who earned her bread by the work of her hands! comprehended with a woman's quick intuition the matter of my mental debate, read it from my face, and said, "Do not tell me anything unless you wish; I can trust you."

"Do you?" I asked, with a pathetic intensity of earnestness. "How far?"

"When you are in bed I will tell you," she said. "First of all, these wet things must come off."

"Now you shall know," she began, "if I may get in with you."

So she got into my bed,—it was, or rather had been made so by my desire, a double-bedded room,—and proceeded, "So far as this, I know you have never touched a penny to steal it. I see everything, but say very little. Here is the common-sense view of the thing-you never spend anything, you never go out, you have no companions, no expensive habits—how can you get rid of the money? Others, sharing your duties, live fast, dress well, are lavish in their expenditure, yet no one thinks of them, or rather of him! I believe I could at this moment put my finger upon the thief, but I could not prove my suspicions to be well I see nothing for it but quiet waiting, until founded. something turns up to confirm them."

"Supposing I had proof?"

"Then I should say that you ought at once to inform Mr. Harwood, and free yourself from the blame; because you are believed by most of the assistants to be guilty. If you knew as much of the world as I do. you would get rid of the onus of this thing as quickly as possible. Supposing one of the assistants should leave before the matter is fully cleared up, he, or she, would take away with them an impression of your dishonesty so strong that it might bear bitter fruit for you in after days."

"If I only dare tell you?" I half-muttered to myself, but her quick ear detected it, and her next question

was still bearing toward the point.

"Can you not trust me even as I have trusted you?"
"I would if it did not involve so much pain to others."

"Trust me, and let us consult together."

Thus she spoke until I yielded; but I was totally unprepared for the indignant fashion after which she

received my news.

"No wonder you hesitated! Fred Harwood! I could stake my very soul upon his honesty, and his honour! You must be mistaken about the half-crown. Do not entertain that thought. The boy is as innocent of such wrong-doing as I."

"But he had the money. I saw it, and there my proof ends. We four are the only persons who enter the desk; Mr. Harwood would not steal from himself;

I do not take the money——"

"Mr. Holden?" interrupted Miss Hamilton.

"He blames me, even utters taunts, and is everlastingly reminding me how far the accounts are out on the wrong side. No, it is almost certain that the blame rests with Fred."

"You are not sensible in so arguing. Here is what I have ascertained about Mr. Holden. He has a wife. as you are aware, and after business hours he goes to his own home. Perhaps you have never seen his place? the rent of it must be about sixty pounds a year; it is well furnished; his wife lives as a lady should, drives her pony-carriage, gives her croquet parties, her archery meetings, dresses so as to adorn the position these represent, while Mr. Holden's income is exactly two hundred per annum. Mr. Harwood knows all this, but is told that the, seeming, incongruities are easily explained; that Mrs. Holden possesses money in her own right, but her husband considers it most dishonourable to live upon her means, so he enters upon the duties of a clerkship; thus his employer's scruples are overcome, and Mr. Holden's social position is so enhanced, by this frank statement, that both Mr. and Mrs. Harwood visit at Woodlands—his home."

She went on, "All this looks very fair, but here comes his wife's story. The firm of Messrs. Selby, Harwood. and Co. embrace her husband as well as Mr. Harwood, the former being the company; he receives about six hundred pounds per annum as his share of the profits, and two hundred pounds, in addition, for the duties he performs as clerk, but for which his partners will insist that he should take remuneration. All of these particulars she told my cousin, as a matter of confidence between the two, and every item of it she most implicitly believes. One day I mentioned to him Mrs. Holden's fortune, and inadvertently he told me I was wrong, that she was almost penniless when married. but that her husband's income was good. A few moments later my cousin suddenly remembered how it was she had given him the particulars of her husband's income, and then he explained it, asking me not to say anything more about the matter. Ever since that time my eyes have been opened, and I have seen more than you have dreamt of. If Fred is a thief—which he is not-Mr. Holden is also one, yet I fancy his course is nearly run."

"But if these things are true, his brother must also be aware of the fraud practised," I said, "for Mr. Holden's younger brother has the entire management

of one of the departments."

"Not necessarily; still, I believe he is cognisant of, if not a partner in, his guilt."

"How can he be a partner in it?"

"I have kept a watch upon him also, and the robbery of the till is not the only one going on here, unless I am strangely mistaken. I should have told you all this before, but I was not aware how sorely you were driven, and I know, by experience, that waiting is often the surest way to see the end, in the straightest and best fashion. I am telling you now, because we must find it out—I mean, the truth of the whole affair—as quickly as possible, or it will be too late. Now, try and go to sleep; I will, religiously,.

keep the secret of your escapade; but you had better recover yourself before you come down to the office. I will bring you up a cup of hot coffee, and also tell Mr. Harwood that you are unwell; so take my advice, and rest yourself thoroughly before you come downstairs. I must get up at once."

And truly comforted, though yet far from decided about Fred's innocence, I watched her as she dressed herself in the cold, winter, light; and listened to the taking down of the shutters from the shop-windows beneath, until I gave way to the languor creeping over me, and, finally, obeying her injunctions, I slept.

Awaking some hours later, I saw her standing by me with some deliciously fragrant coffee, while the

housemaid was kindling a fire in the grate.

"I asked the housekeeper to indulge you," she answered, as my questioning look met her face. "I told her you were unwell, and she will be up presently to see you." Then as the fire burnt up with a steady blaze, thus rendering it unnecessary for Jane to linger, Miss Hamilton said, "After Mrs. Joyce has been up, we must try and get your things dried by this fire. It will not do to let her know the state they are in." As she spoke she opened the cupboard, which we used as a wardrobe, and I saw the pool of water that had run from my heavily hanging garments.

"You are so kind and thoughtful," was the answer I made as I gazed admiringly into her face. But she abruptly dismissed the subject, and holding up a letter said, "This came for you by the early morning post; I did not bring it up before, because you were sleeping."

"I do not know the handwriting, and it has the S—— postmark," I said, as I turned it over in my hand. "There must be some mistake; I do not know a soul in S——."

"Open it, and you will soon find out who is your

correspondent."

Following her advice, I did so, and glanced towards the conclusion of it to see the signature appended.

There was none. It was one of those cruel, cowardly things—an anonymous letter. I was not as wise concerning these epistles then as I am now, or it would have had no power to hurt me. I did not know them for what they are—the weapons of a coward who dare not stab in open daylight, but does it in the dark; the mean outcome of the thoughts of a puny soul; the dishonest subterfuge of a scoundrel who dare not face the light. Ay, and when I hear men vaunt the noble attributes of humanity as needing no God, I think of these viler deeds, and am abased, because it can lend itself to such.

I read it with scorn, yet it hurt me. "Proud, and a thief!" I said to myself, as I gave the letter to Miss

Hamilton, and asked her to read it.

"May I do as I like with the thing?" she said, holding it at arm's length from her, making her request with intense disgust in her tones.

"'**.**Yes."

"It has upset you; you are getting whiter and whiter." Then she crossed over to the clear burning fire, and I watched it consume my letter.

"Bah!" she exclaimed, coming back to my bedside; "what vile things men and women can become;

I feel as if I had been holding a serpent."

"Who can have sent it?"

"Never mind that, my dear. I have a shrewd guess, but the best plan is, for the present, to take no notice of it. These instruments are never used by any but very wicked or very ignorant people."

"I never saw one before."

"Then you have increased your knowledge, and that is worth living for," she said, with an attempt at gaiety, trying to deceive me as to her real feelings.

"Increase of knowledge ever seems to mean increase

of pain," was my answer, wearily given.

"Yes; but it also means more. In a little time you will look upon the contents of that letter with a contempt too strong to allow of the slightest feeling

of suffering. When we were children at home—my brother and I—we used to be taken to a chapel to worship, where religion meant minding everybody's business but your own; so its members, desiring to have a finger in my father's affairs, were wont, now and again, to favour him with one of these documents concerning the manner in which he should train us. One I especially remember. My brother's behaviour in Sunday-school had not been of the best, so the following day found my father perusing a badly-written, and worse-spelt, effusion, in which he was recommended not to 'spare the rod and spile the child.'"

I could not help smiling at her mimicry, while I questioned—" What did he do?"

"Kept the letter as a curiosity; I have it now. You shall read it for yourself some day."

"Did he ever have any more of the same sort?"

"No, I think not, after that one, but I had. As I grew up the necessities of my soul craved for higher, purer, teaching than I could get in such a church, and I am afraid I too clearly evidenced my contempt for some of its members; my feelings running in another groove, I turned my back upon my father's church, and sought to drown the voice of my heart by rushing into every extravagance, and, so-called, pleasures. was very unhappy at home, and the excitement of dancing, flirting, &c., made me, for the time, forgetful of the cause of my unhappiness. Thus I literally wore out my health in seeking life-giving water from broken cisterns. Then I was favoured with one of these unsigned documents; and, in a letter which showed the writer's need of both a dictionary and a Bible, I was coolly and impertinently informed that, for these my misdoings, unless I repented—after the writer's manner of repentance—in the day of reckoning my parents would have to say 'Amen' to my condemnation."

"How did you feel when you read it?" I asked, wondering if it had wounded her as mine had done me.

"I hardly remember. I think at first it struck me as such a piece of impudence that the writer should presume to address me in so strange a style, for I had seen the handwriting before, and thus knew who had penned this wonderful admixture of ignorance and lies; then—I was so wicked at that time—I took the letter to a schoolfellow of mine, and between us we drew a clever cartoon of Satan waiting for me, while the pious (?) sender of the letter devoutly ejaculated 'Amen.' After which we affixed it to the vestry doors inside the chapel, together with the thing that called forth the sketch. You may well look horrified, but some wicked spirit moved me to do it, so underneath the two I wrote the reversal of Ruth's declaration, 'These people shall not be my people and their God shall not be my God.' A bitter contempt for them made me feel as if hell would be preferable to a heaven composed of men and women who could pen such specimens of Christian doctrine. Yet I repented my rash deed long ago; although nothing short of losing Christ and heaven would ever make me worship with them again. Fancy a religion that could prompt a person to tell a girl that the love of a parental heart could subscribe the 'Amen,' at her consignment to a place of everlasting torment. If God is the essence of love, surely He never would debase His creation to such an extent as this, that they should have to verbally acquiesce in the tortures of the children to whom they have given birth. Such a thing is an act over which the devils might glee!"

"What happened after you put the letter upon the door?"

"My father was the first to see it; he took it down, and for months after, I was uncertain of its fate, yet during that time, I never crossed the threshold of the chapel."

"Your father did not urge you to do so?" I queried.
"No, he was too wise and kind for that. After my bitterness had quieted itself, I entered another church and found both rest and food for my heart."

"I wish I were like you now," I said.

"Don't do that, dear. My life is none too happy! If the past and the future could both be shut off from our gaze, it might be so. But when the latter does not appal the former often does."

"I wish you knew Chrissie," I exclaimed. "She is contented and happy, yet she has had such bitter

trouble."

At this moment Mrs. Joyce came in to see me, also to tell Miss Hamilton that she was wanted in the shop. Thus I was left to ponder over the various revelations that had been made to me since the preceding evening.

### CHAPTER XXVI.

## MR. HOLDEN'S GUILT.

Lying there I tried to think who was the writer of the letter I had received; also if Mr. Holden could pos-

sibly be the thief.

Mrs. Joyce had recommended me not to get up until tea time; also, during the dinner hour, Miss Hamilton again ran up to see me, and seconded the housekeeper's advice, finishing with the words, "While you are downstairs this evening I will contrive to get your things dry up here."

About three o'clock in the afternoon a timid rap came on my bedroom door, and Fred's voice followed up the rapping with, "Are you better, Miss da Costa?

I am so sorry you are ill."

"I shall soon be downstairs," I answered, through

the closed door. "How are you getting on?"

"Mr. Holden's in an awful wax about something; and the Pater caught me reading in the desk, so he

snubbed me, and altogether everything is about as bad as it can be," this mournfully; then in a more cheerful voice, "Never mind, I can put up with it for your sake, but I don't like business."

"I shall be in the desk again to-morrow," was the

assurance I gave him as he went away.

That afternoon it seemed as if I were to have no peace, for as Fred departed Mrs. Harwood came in. After inquiring about my health, she began upon the old topic, but this time I was not so afraid of her

questioning.

"There is likely to be a revelation soon," she said, "concerning some business affairs which do not seem altogether as straight as they ought to be. Perhaps it will clear up this other matter that is giving us so much trouble. Mr. Harwood intends taking you into his confidence, concerning the facts, so we can talk it over if you feel able."

Feel able! Why, it would be the very best medicine I could have if only my name might be thoroughly cleared; so I scarcely waited for her to finish the sentence before I entreated, "Tell me anything; talk over every matter, if only it will help me to prove that

I am not the thief."

Here are the particulars of the conversation. Mr. Holden, in addition to his duties as clerk, also occasionally travelled for the firm—i.e., he solicited orders from small retail drapers, who could not give them extensive enough for the London warehouses. That morning Mr. Harwood had received a letter from one of these customers asking a receipt for the sum of forty pounds, paid to Mr. Holden three days previously. The omission of sending the receipt was the only thing that struck Mr. Harwood as he read the letter at his breakfast-table. It was one of his habits to open all the morning letters before he came down into business, so they were always taken upstairs to him as soon as they were delivered at the box. Mrs. Harwood was told of the contents of the letter, and, keenly

alive to the annoyances of the past few months, she urged that her husband should run downstairs and look at the cash-book to see if an entry of the money, received, appeared upon its pages. Her husband laughed at her suggestion, but complied; coming back with a much slower step than that with which he went away.

No entry had been made of the amount for which Mr. R—— claimed a receipt. More than this, upon the day mentioned, the cash had been eighteen shillings short. "I cannot understand it, my dear," he said to his wife, when he had fairly searched through the amounts paid in during the month. "There must be some mistake on Mr. R----'s side. Perhaps he forgot to post the letter. I will ask Mr. Holden to speak to him about it when he goes there this morning. Fortunately it is the day for Whiterow, so he can see about the matter." Mrs. Harwood had her own ideas upon the subject, so she urged him not to speak to his clerk about the letter; but to write to Mr. R---- himself, and until he received a reply find some obstacle to put in Mr. Holden's way, so that he should not go to Whiterow, the place where Mr. R--- lived, until the matter was looked into. At first Mr. Harwood objected, but, finally, yielding to his wife's solicitations. Mr. Holden was detained at the office work, much to his vexation. Not daring to show his annoyance to his employer, he had freely evidenced it to the assistants, thus fully justifying Fred's statement that he was in an "awful wax," which said description of his humour was more forceful than elegant.

This was not all. Upon the remaining portion of Mrs. Harwood's disclosure, much of her hopeful spirit as to the discovery of the thief was built. Her husband had been looking into the wholesale ledger, and to his astonishment had found that not only was there no credit of money against Mr. R——'s name, but that, according to the books, no such person existed. Upon the page numbered fifty-seven, the same name appeared, but it belonged to a pushing tradesman who

was personally well known to Mr. Harwood, and the largest entry against him was for thirty-three pounds, the amount of which had been duly credited by the head of the firm himself.

"It must be for Mr. Harvey," said Mr. Harwood, as he re-perused the letter. "How stupid of me to worry myself about the matter!" Then he took up the envelope and again, critically, read the superscription,

yet the name upon it was undeniably his own.

When under the influence of strong excitement, persons are, as a general rule, thoroughly incoherent. I vet managed to make out Mrs. Harwood's story thus far. I inquired, "You believe that a Mr. R—, of Whiterow, does really exist?"

"Most certainly."

"Also, that he has been supplied with goods to the amount of forty pounds?"

"Yes. If he had not, why was the receipt asked?"

"Then, putting it into plain words, you believe Mr. Holden has taken, and stolen, this money?"

" I do."

"Does Mr. Harwood think the same?"

"No; he says there must be an error somewhere. This morning he started for Whiterow, himself—but this is to be kept a secret from Mr. Holden—to find out if any goods had been sent to a Mr. R-; if so, by whom they were delivered, and which of the porters gave them to the carrier. I have had great difficulty in persuading him to go, but then I hope much from the results of his journey."

"I cannot but desire that it may be so," I answered, as I thought of the burden of trouble that rested upon me. "I shall be happier if proved innocent!" I finished, gratefully, as well as earnestly, for it was no part of my creed to forget a kindness, and Mrs. Harwood's faith in me was a balm to my anguish such as I could

never forget.

I went down into my own room to take tea, for Mrs. Joyce insisted on looking after my comfort to

such an extent that it almost conduced to the opposite effect.

At last the shop was closed, and Fred came in; taking up his old position on the hearthrug he began, "I am glad you are not going to be thoroughly ill! Only fancy if I had been obliged to stick in that desk for no end of time. I believe I should have had delirium tremens, and seen all sorts of money dodging round me. By the bye, the cash was right to-night, and I expected that Pater would have commended my extraordinary carefulness, but nothing of the sort. He is glum!"

"Has he been out to-day?" I asked.

"Out! I should rather think he had? If he had shown his usual sweetness of temperament, I should have asked him if there were any election business on foot. This morning he came up to me quite sharp, and seeing that I was carefully improving my mind with a course of 'Frank Fairleigh' he didn't forget to hold forth. Not patting my head, after the fashion of affectionate fathers, he said, 'If you profess to do a thing at all, do it properly; you can read after busi-I was taken aback, but I simply said, 'Yes, sir.' Then he gave me a ticket for five pounds, taking the cash out of the till himself. I thought he was off on the spree, without telling his devoted sons, so I asked Holden to go into the desk for a few moments that I might have an opportunity of seeing if such were the case, but he answered, as sharp as possible, that it was not his place. If he had done duty for me I should have looked after the Pater's affairs, because it does not have a comfortable appearance when a man takes five pounds and goes off to spend it without consulting his youthful olive branches."

I was obliged to laugh at Fred's nonsense, in spite of the seriousness of the business upon which Mr. Harwood had gone, but in my heart I was ever desirous that my innocency might be brought to light. Hiding these feelings, I endeavoured to take

up Fred's tone as I asked, "When he returned, I

suppose he satisfied your curiosity?"

"Indeed, he did not! When the 'second party' were up in the dining-room, for dinner, Holden had to coop up his legs in the desk, while I stretched mine, so I swallowed my mutton as fast as possible, and betook myself to the music-saloon for another part-song which I want for to-night. When I was rushing down the street, Sam Inglis met me, so he thought I was in too much of a hurry to be going back to the desk; you know it isn't like me to rush at the top of my speed for the privileges of sitting in that wooden coffin, therefore it was no wonder he asked me what was up. 'Your paternal relative was in a hurry this morning, too,' he said, as he put his arm through mine. 'Tell me what's up? Is it a picnic in December, or a wedding?'

"'A picnic,' I answered. 'We are going to dine on roasted snow and fricassed icicles! When did you see

him?

"'This morning; he was driving like mad. I thought you or Clem had eloped, and that he was following you up.' Wasn't I mad when Sam told me. I think he might have asked Clem to go into the desk and then have taken me with him," concluded this spoilt boy. "But when I said so, he turned on me as sharp as possible and said, 'Mind your own business; I can attend to mine without your assistance.' You should have seen old Holden grin when the Pater said this; I believe it has made him happy for a month."

"Perhaps he will tell you all you want to know by-

and-by," I suggested.

"Do you think I ought to rave and tear my hair?" he questioned, adding, seriously, with a quick transition from his assumed tones of dismay, "It is years since he dropped upon me like that."

"Perhaps he is worried," was the answer I gave.

"Well, so am I," with assumed gravity, "yet I

should not think of making an innocent person suffer

because of my strained feelings."

Thus Fred made light of the thing which was almost life or death to me. I could not help wishing that I might be left alone, in order that I might think out all the things which portended, the discomfiture of the real thief, and, the support of my innocence; so I told him how tired and ill I felt, desiring him to leave me that I might try and thoroughly rest myself. he was out of the room his father came in, and offering his hand to me, said, "I believe we are more than on the track of the thief. Mrs. Harwood has told you where I have been to-day, has she not? thought so. Well, I found out this Mr. R---, and with some little difficulty introduced myself, and my business to him, asking if he really had paid a sum of money to our firm; if so, to whom? He told me in return that he had paid Mr. Holden the amount, in notes and gold, for value received in the shape of bales of flannel for his winter stock; that, when the goods were delivered to him, he had written to me asking if he might settle my claim by a three months' bill, and had received in reply a note from Mr. Holden, stating that we had a business rule from which we did not depart, that of never discounting bills of our customers, but, if it would suit him, the account could run until December, three months hence. Of course Mr. Rwas willing to let the matter rest thus, and on last Monday morning he paid to our clerk the money due, and in return was told, by Mr. Holden, that he had forgotten to bring with him the ordinary printed forms of receipt, used by our firm, but that one should be forwarded to him by the next post. In all good faith Mr. R—— assented, but up to yesterday morning's date had received none, therefore he, very naturally, wrote desiring me to forward it. Here is the point of the whole matter. Mr. Holden usually opens the letterbox himself, but this morning I accidentally sent Fred down for them; as they had not arrived he waited and took them from the postman's hands. Had such not been the case, I have reason to believe, that particular one would never have fallen into my hands, for it is evident that others have been stolen. In addition to this I was standing by the shop door this evening when the last delivery of letters came, and amongst the others was this one returned from the London office. Mr. Holden had, by mistake, directed the letter to Mr. R—, Draper, London, instead of Whiterow, and there is the receipt in question, also it is upon one of our own forms."

I read it, through a misty cloud that dimmed my

eyes, but, it was pertinent enough:

"Received of Messrs. Selby, Harwood, and Co., the sum of forty pounds sterling, for value received.

"December —, 18—." "CHARLES HOLDEN.

# CHAPTER XXVII.

#### FULLY PROVEN.

- "I know of no guilt so black as the foul one of allowing crime to rest upon the shoulders of another, instead of the sinner's own."—AN OLD WRITER.
- "Now," continued Mr. Harwood, "we shall be able to bring the guilt home to him. I do not intend at present to do so. I want first to prove, indisputably, that he is the thief of the till. Of course, I believe him to be so, but that will not convict him."
- "Thank God!" burst from my lips, even though only a few hours before I was "seeking life in death," trying to drown my present pain at the fearful risk of meriting eternal wrath.
- "After all this bother, you must come in and spend the evening with us. We will make you as comfortable as possible," smiled Mrs. Harwood.

"Pray, do excuse me to-night; I am worn-out, and

ill." was the only answer I could make her.

"Well, you shall have your own way for once," she acquiesced, as she saw for herself how thoroughly exhausted I was.

"We must prove him the thief of the till," Mr. Harwood had said, while again my mind had reverted to the marked half-crowns. I quieted my thoughts with the idea that on the morrow I would plainly ask Fred how they had come into his possession.

I found out that night how my health was suffering. through the perpetual strain upon my nerves, for sleep would not come to me. I resolved that I would ask Mr. Harwood to give me a short holiday, that I might see Chrissie and my darling Maggie again.

This, however, was not to be! When I went downstairs next morning Fred was not there. A little later and his mother came into the office, and told me he had a slight, feverish, cold, that she had recommended him to stay in bed, and thus get rid of it. was inwardly amused, for I imagined the cold to be very slight indeed; he had been in such excellent health and spirits upon the previous night. Going into the desk I took "Frank Fairleigh" from underneath the cash book, and sent it upstairs to him, by one of the servants, thinking it would be just the thing to meet his wants.

"Mr. Fred thanks you very much, but his head aches so bad that he can't read," was the return message. All that day I never moved out of the desk. excepting when Mr. Harwood took my place at meal times; again with the same result. The cash was

right to a penny.

The following day it was short, two pounds ten shillings being the sum missing. But the question was how to prove who had taken it. Fred's cold was Whenever we passed his bedroom door we could hear him sneezing and coughing, as if he had to do duty for a hundred influenzas. Cheerful as ever, he

used to throw back some laughing answers, as I stood outside his room and inquired after his health. "Six handkerchiefs an hour. The Pater has gone downstairs to mark up our stock," he said, as I asked him what he meant by staying upstairs so long, and leaving me on full duty.

"You are going to have a holiday when I am better," he continued, in a thin, yet stuffy, voice. "The Pater says you are home-sick. Are you?"

"Awfully," I answered. "Do be quick and recover!"

Home-sick? Ay, was I not?

"We must watch Mr. Holden very carefully," Mr. Harwood said to me, a week later. Fred was still upstairs, complaining more than ever of unrelieved aches and pains. He confided to me that such were his feelings that he could compare them to nothing else than the ones he once experienced when he had been thoroughly "milled" at school. The doctor came and went, laughing at, and with, his patient, as doctors do, but still Fred remained uncured. "Colds must have their day," Fred would say to me, when I teasingly remonstrated with him for keeping out of the desk so long. "But what with the gruel and other abominations the 'day' is almost unbearable. I think I shall be able to sneeze quite scientifically soon!"

Preparations were made for Mr. Holden's detection, and we four were in the secret—Mr. and Mrs. Harwood, Clemence, and I. The staircase leading to the millinery and show-rooms was a spiral one, and above these rooms there was a store. Once on the top of the stairs, any person, standing there, could see each transaction taking place in the desk. But one difficulty existed, and that was, how to get up the stairs at the time in which Mr. Holden was in the desk without being seen by him, for the first step of it was close by the desk. This puzzled us some days, then a brilliant idea struck Mrs. Harwood. We were talking the matter, with its difficulties, over, when she

said, "I have it! Come into the drawing-room at once, and I will show you what I mean."

We followed her, and she went to the eastern wall, saying, "This partition is the only thing between the drawing-room and the second landing of the staircase. You follow me? Well, if we had this opened, it would be a very easy matter to reach the floor of the storeroom. Once there, Mr. Holden's actions would be under your very eyes, for you could"—turning to me—"come up to dinner at the usual time, leaving him in the desk; then Mr. Harwood could tell him that he would not be in for an hour or two, and Mr. Holden will naturally conclude that the field is open to him."

"You will make a good detective, my dear," inter-

polated Mr. Harwood.

"Don't talk nonsense, but listen. We can then, all four, creep up the stairs, and see for ourselves—one informant and three witnesses, enough to convict in any court in England."

"He would be aware of the alterations, and then

your scheme would fail," put in Clemence.

"Nothing of the sort. This partition is wood. In matter-of-fact words, it is, I believe, nothing more or less than a folding-door. If we had a carpenter, he could take off the paper, and move it as easily as possible."

"But Mr. Holden would know of it. He has access to almost every portion of the house," again objected Clemence. "You see, mamma, he is everlastingly going up to the stores, so it would not be by any

means an easy thing to elude his eyes."

"Then the alterations must be made after business hours," said Mrs. Harwood. "Let me go up the staircase now. Mr. Holden has gone home, and the assistants are all out, so we can go on our voyage of discovery without any eye-witnesses."

We followed her, the candle she held throwing its light upon Clemence's stern, determined, face as she did so; up the long, winding stairs until we reached the second landing. She was right as to the material from which the partition was formed, for there was the other side of it, panelled and oak-coloured as unmistakably as if it were labelled.

Next evening a carpenter was busy at work. At ten o'clock the same night we passed through the silently-gliding doors, and stood on the staircase, or rather

upon the second landing of it.

"The trap is made; now for the mouse!" said Mrs. Harwood, exultantly, as she patted her hands together with the action growing familiar to me.

But many a trap is made into which no prey enters! For a fortnight we watched this one in vain; no mouse

was caught.

I was bewildered. Again the thought of Fred presented itself, for the cash was ever counted with one

result—it balanced!

Meantime he grew worse—slowly, but surely. He did not mend, and in sickness that is the first step towards regaining vigour. But he was so patient. I like to think of it now. It does seem hard when Death takes the young and happy into his arms, but I do not think it is really so. God surely smiles the sweetest upon those who earliest are called to Him. The child sleeps purely and soundly when put to rest at night's earliest hour. How many of us can say the same when the repose comes after the fitful glare of the gas, and the excitement of the evening's pleasures or pains? Whate'er God wills is best!

Who does not know it? Once trusting Him, who

can deny it?

"Into the shadow of Death;" but behind the shadow is the Sun, and to this our dead go. Why should we grieve? I am in a happy, trustful, mood

to-day, as I write of this going sun-wards.

Life holds so much of pain as well as pleasure that, after all, it is good to think of these, our loved, as freed from its fetters. The darkness so quickly follows the brightness, here, that we like to think of a land where all is gladness, unmarred by aught of anguish.

During Fred's illness he was mad, as ever, over music. As he daily grew worse, it was one continued

prayer of his, "Sing!"

Night after night I sat in his room, by the firelight's glow, singing to him the songs that he best loved; hymns full of God's Divine compassion, or fraught with imagery of heaven's "bliss beyond compare."

Oh, my bonnie, laughing, Fred, I think even the angels must have felt glad to have had your sweetness.

in their keeping!

"It will be well if he dies," the doctor finally said, when rheumatic fever had done its worst, "for he will

never walk again."

That was the doctor's verdict; but oh, how different to ours! We would have kept him with us for ever. I, who had never known a brother's love, had adopted this boy fully into my heart, faults and all. Verily, I believe if he had been proven guilty of the theft I must have loved him even then.

As I have before said, after the folding-doors had given us free access to the spot from which we could witness Mr. Holden's doings, a whole fortnight elapsed without giving any clue to the manner in which the money had previously been abstracted.

The books invariably balanced; but at last our

watchings were rewarded.

One Saturday morning Mr. Harwood was obliged to go to London on business, so the desk was left in my

charge, of course with Mr. Holden's assistance.

At ten o'clock in the morning, Mr. Harwood came into the office with a telegram in his hand, and said, "I am obliged to go off at once on that business of Poulter and Harris's. If I am wanted, say I shall be out of town until evening."

He returned by the six p.m. train, but we were none of us the wiser concerning this fact, until a very much later hour. First of all he sat for a short time with Fred; then, as he was coming down to business, he

bethought him that it was near the closing hour, and Mr. Holden would be making up the books, so he ran upstairs, passed through the folding-doors of the drawing-room, and looked down through the stair rails.

My innocence was fully proved! The fellow was pocketing the proceeds of his pilfering. As he made no movement to leave the desk, Mr. Harwood ran softly down the intervening steps to the drawing-room, and summoning his wife he bade her go quietly down into the shop, and, upon some pretext, manage to send the foreman up to him. This she did, and as he, and my employer, stood leaning over the rails watching Mr. Holden, I went, unconscious of their movements, to the desk, took up the file of bills I had paid that day, with the intention of carrying them into the inner office. Mr. Holden held out some invoices as I did so, saying, "You may as well take these with you. You are going into the office, I suppose?"

"Yes; it is a quarter to eight, nearly time the cash was counted. Shall I carry the tills in also?" For this was the place in which the money was usually

 $\cdot$  counted.

"No; I will bring them directly. I think you have made a mistake in the addition of this list, and I am going to add it up for my satisfaction."

"I have been over it twice," I coolly answered, for I was vexed that he should remain in the desk when he was the very last person I wished to see in it.

Reluctantly I went away with my armful of papers, while he, knowing of Mr. Harwood's absence, also took the opportunity mine offered, and proceeded to finish his theft.

"Two pounds four shillings short!" was his comment as he closed the cash book that night, and gave it to me with an air of resignation, as if it were impossible that the figures ever could tally while I kept the account of them.

I was about to retort, when Mr. Harwood's voice

stopped me. He said, in words, over which rage and calmness were striving for the mastery, but in a tone of sternness such as I am not likely to forget—"Yes, sir, that is the exact amount! You have it in your

pocket!"

Words will never paint the scene which followed, as the craven, convicted, wretch first denied, then, afterwards, confessed his guilt. With a face blanched to deathly whiteness, he owned his deeds, prayingcrouching like a suppliant dog - for mercy, and entreating, for his wife's sake, that Mr. Harwood would not prosecute him.

. "You should have thought of your wife before," answered my employer, in tones so hard and cold that, with all the influences of the disclosure about me, I yet, involuntarily, looked at him in awe and

amazement.

## CHAPTER XXVIII.

#### MY HOLIDAY COMMENCES.

"Do not prosecute me," Mr. Holden urged. "My wife would die of the shame. She knows nothing of

the thefts, and it will kill her."

"You thought nothing of Miss da Costa's feelings. You were not man enough even to commit a wrong without letting its fruit of shame fall upon a woman's shoulders."

"I did not intend that it should be so," pleaded Mr. Holden, as the hard, cold, tones of Mr. Harwood's voice showed him how little sympathy he need expect.

Some influence urged me to do the thing I did. There are deeds in our lives for which we can never account; but, at that moment, a woman's pale. pleading, face rose before me. One who called this man husband must suffer with him, so with faltering lips I urged, "Let him go! For his wife's sake free him! See how she will suffer, and for no fault of her own!"

"You had to suffer the suspicion of being the perpetrator of his deeds," answered Mr. Harwood, with inflexible voice. "Why should she be spared?"

In a moment the remembrance of my terrible anguish flashed over me. I viewed myself crouching, wet, desolate, and afraid, upon the old weather-beaten bridge, and by my own heart I read the sufferings in store for Mrs. Holden when once her husband's guilt was publicly known. As I would have pleaded for Philip so I entreated for him, almost in desperation, when I thought of the story his wife would have to hear.

Do not misunderstand me! I so scorned the man, that I could hardly bear to look at such a mean and contemptible specimen of humanity—one who could put his own sins upon the shoulders of a helpless woman. Yet it was for another woman I pleaded!

I won. At least, I secured Mr. Harwood's promise that for the present he would take no steps towards his judicial convictment.

As he never crossed my path again, I may as well, at once, tell you how this matter was finally arranged. His wife was told the whole painful story. It so broke down her health and spirits, that she became a confirmed invalid—one to whom I had much power to minister comfort in after days—but she never fully rallied from the effects of the shock. She had trusted her husband; as in one nobler, higher, and grander than herself, to find him false to the very core; married to her upon the strength of a lie, and following the first one up as the basis upon which to build many more.

I shall never forget the days following the one in which he was dismissed from the services of the firm. Trusted implicitly, he had managed to falsify almost

every business account. He had kept all the books; the records of monetary transactions from the cash book to the ledger had all passed through his hands, so he had possessed ample opportunities of robbing. Many of Mr. Harwood's most influential and wealthy customers had preferred to settle their accounts in the inner office, thus no note of these had been made at my desk. After his dismissal all the half-yearly bills were sent out, and then ensued the time of trial for us. We viewed every customer with dread, for the first few days, their invariable business being, "My settlement of last year's account is not allowed for." Then followed the producing of Mr. Holden's receipt for the amount.

This bold sinner had not been content to commit the sin of theft only, for he had forged my name to several of the settlements. "Margaret da Costa" figured largely upon bills which, previously, had never come under my notice. I was aghast at the everrecurring revelations, while Mr. Harwood lived in a state of worry far from enviable.

"We shall lose every customer," he would say, when some haughty dame had swept out, indignation ruffling every gesture of her form. "We shall gain a name for this sort of thing, and shall never be able to redeem it."

Mrs. Harwood used to brighten him up by saying that the storm would soon pass, and the old house was too good a one to be passed over even for the annoyance of having bills sent in after the ordinary settlement of them.

"All our customers are friends of each other," he would argue. "They will talk the matter over together, and I shall reap the benefit by losing them."

But although no prosecution took place, people did pass exactly the same verdict as would have been theirs under such a circumstance, for Mr. Holden's hasty departure, and the subsequent sale of his house and furniture, gave them the clue. After much annoyance, Mr. Harwood fairly tided over the fruit of Mr. Holden's thefts, but the ending

of it was not so pleasant for me.

Long after my innocence had most fully been proved the assistants continued to believe in my guilt. Always with one exception, Miss Hamilton. I made her my confidente over this affair, for she had been so truly womanly in her behaviour towards me.

There is ever a reaction after excitement, no matter if it be material or spiritual; therefore I experienced no small amount of languor and lassitude after my exoneration from the weight of suspicion. Thus it happened, one night early in February, Mr. Harwood noticed my increasing pallor, and spoke to me of the necessity of change of air and scene, with which to tranquillise my fever-wearied pulses.

"But Fred?" I said, in answer to his proposition that I should go at once, "who can take my place in

the desk and with him? No, I cannot leave."

The same evening the doctor said to me, "Miss da Costa, Mr. Harwood and I agree that you must get away from here, for a time. Have you not friends you can visit?"

"Yes, but I do not like to leave Fred," I answered.

The boy's old, merry, laugh broke from his lips as he answered, "I do not want you; I am getting so strong. Bless you, in a few days I shall be well enough to throw the pillows at you." Vain were all my representations of unwillingness to leave the lad. I was overruled. Thus I sat by his side, as we talked of Chrissie and my baby—Moey's child—knowing that it was our last night before my holiday. My trunk was packed, and soon I should be in Chrissie's arms, with my precious child-gift in my own embrace.

Well do I remember the sort of night it was. The coals were piled high in the grate of Fred's bedroom, and we were each trying to be lively at the other's

expense.

"You will write to me, will you not?" he said, after

we had spoken of Philip and his work. "I shall so want a letter from you; if you could only sing the news to me instead of writing it."

My eyes were full of tears as I answered him. "Fred, you do not seem to care about anything save music; I wonder if you will ever love anything more than it?"

A soft, holy, tranquillising, light dawned in his beautiful eyes as he looked at me, then putting together his thin, shadowy, hands he said, "No; I do not think I could. Sometimes I think God will let me sing for ever. I like to feel the grand sounds rising round me. When I hear music I feel as if I were under the spell of some spirit, of God's, that comes to bear me into newer, happier, life. My soul expands; I forget all else but the one thing; it seems as if angels were ministering to me."

I could hardly speak to the boy. He went on-

"Sing to me once again."

I could not move my voice upon a single note now

of the hymn I sang.

Only last summer I was speaking to one of Europe's greatest singers; we were talking of Scotch songs, and I asked her to sing "Robin Adair." She was a woman whose audiences had comprised thousands, before whom she had stood with unblanched cheek; yet, as I spoke of that song, she said, in tones tremulous with sorrow, "I cannot; I have sung it to my dead!" I understood!

I finished my attempt at one of Fred's favourite hymns, when Dr. Lake again came into Fred's bedroom. My own feelings had been so difficult of control that I had not noticed Fred's face until my song was finished. Looking up, I saw that both Mr. and Mrs. Harwood were with us. Poor Fred's cheery voice again came to me, but the anguish was hard to bear when I looked at him in the full light of the gas.

"Well, doctor, you have just come in time. I have been racked with pain, these last few hours, in a

fashion such as would have compelled an ancient Jew to eat pork on a Friday, if only he could have escaped by so doing. Do give me something to ease my pain,

or else finish me off quickly."

Dr. Lake looked grave as he saw our boy's face; so did we all, yet in the moment of supreme trial it retained the boyish purity of expression which was its chief characteristic. "Don't joke about such things, Fred," said he, and there was real pain in his voice as he spoke. "These things are too solemn to be made the subject of a jest, and God's goodwill must be done in spite of all that we, human instruments, can do as intercessors."

The grave tones and solemn words fell heavily upon the ears of the watchers, while Mr. Harwood whispered to Dr. Lake words the import of which I had failed to catch; but Fred's quick eye observed it, and again with the old cheerfulness—though it vibrated with the tremor of pain—he said, "You surely do not think I am a child, or a frightened old woman. Doctor, tell me what you think of me; give out your human edict; which is it to be—Death or Life?"

"My poor boy!"—we never forgot Dr. Lake's words—"God's will is always the best. I fear it is Death;" and the speaker buried his face in his hands. Used as he was to such scenes, he was man enough to feel them all!

Mrs. Harwood broke out into convulsive sobbing, while her husband bent an agonised look on the

darling child whose doom had been announced.

Fred's face blanched a little; his eyes, for one moment, lost their settled expression; then his lips tremulously parted, and the brave words came forth, "Amen! Dr. Lake, you have done all you could for me! Now, God's will be done," with one passionate glance at his mother—for, with all this woman's faults, she was as true a mother as any I have ever seen—"It is hard," he continued, emphatically, "very hard; just on the threshold of life, when the battle front has been

reached. God knows best, though." He finished, as turning his wistful eyes to mine, he said, "No more dreams, Miss da Costa; no heroic life of a grand martyr, to fight, for me." Then he lay back on his pillow, with closed eyes, and features working with the intensity of his thoughts.

Mrs. Harwood stood pale as a statue, but composed with the composure of a woman who sees her darling going into an unknown land, and dares make no sign lest her very love should lessen his hold on life. Quietly taking his hand in hers, she held it as we hold things which we know are slipping from us; and God knows, He only, how I pitied her. I thought of my darling, my father; of the love which had ever sheltered me while it was warm and living, then pictured her pain when she should stand desolate, crying, "Benjamin is not."

"Not so desolate as I," was my inward cry, "I lost

all; she will only lose one of her treasures."

"He may last several weeks yet," the doctor said to me, as together we stood at the threshold of the room.

"But it is only a question of time."

The next morning I was on my way to Chrissie, fully believing that I should never look upon Fred's face again; I was also aware of the way by which he had come into the possession of the marked halfcrowns.

### CHAPTER XXIX.

### PHILIP AND CHRISSIE.

THE dear, dear, faces were within view again, and I felt as if I could never look at them long enough. was so good to see the old walks, and witness the pleasant, friendly, footing upon which Philip and Chrissie had so quickly established their home relationship.

Once more I listened to her happy counsel, and wondered how it had been possible for me ever to exist without her. In the evening Philip, Chrissie and I, strolled round the garden and talked of old times, then came indoors out of the cold, to exchange confidences regarding our past. My story you already know, but I was far from prepared for Chrissie's revelation. She was going to marry Philip; he did not profess that she was his ideal love, but he told her the straightforward story of his proposal to me, and of my refusal to be his wife.

"You are really going to marry him, darling?" I asked, as we sat in my bedroom, over a blazing fire which Chrissie had kindled in honour of my visit.

"Yes, Maggie; and I shall be happy. He is so noble; you do not know how his people love him, as if he were something set far above them. I think—do not smile—he is just what a minister ought to be; so sympathetic; and he never deems anything a trouble when he does it for them. I often think he is like a father to them all; I am not worthy of him, Maggie, but I will do my very best."

"You will do, dear," I answered; "that is how I fancy every woman should feel towards the man she marries. Is it not Mrs. Browning who says she is to feel that he

is her world?"

"I am glad you are not vexed, Maggie; I was wondering if you would not be displeased that I should

marry our Moey's husband."

"No, Chrissie," I answered cheerfully. "Why should I? If I were married and should die tomorrow I should like to think my husband could be happy in another love. It is real selfishness, not affection, that prompts a woman when she wishes to control her husband's heart, even after death has parted them."

Then I told her about my sore trial concerning Mr. Holden, also of Fred, who was scarcely ever absent from my thoughts. How I had inwardly accused him

of theft, because he had in his possession the money I had previously marked, and how harmlessly he had taken it in exchange for half a sovereign. In return for this she told me, that, now my sufferings upon that score were over, it would be better for me not to return to S——. She pleaded with me to remain with them, but I could not! I had tasted the sweets of independence, and I was firm in my resolve to earn my own living; true, my bread had been earned in bitterness of heart, but the labour had nothing to do with that, it was the circumstances in which I had been placed.

When I thought of all the pain passed, my heart swelled with a great thanksgiving for my deliverance.

"To-morrow morning I will show you an improvement upon our old ragged school at H——," she said, as we finished our chat about my situation.

"Another school," I laughed. "Chrissie, I believe

you are school mad."

"Children mad, dear! My heart aches so when I see them growing up in the slums of our streets, with their noblest soul capabilities shrouded in the darkness of its ignorance and vice. More than this, I have a night school for boys—one thoroughly organised and properly worked. We want these souls for the Master. They are His, and we must gather them in for Him. I dare not think of a Christless future for any soul; and there is a way to win where driving could not avail."

"You are as enthusiastic as ever," I said. "Now

tell me exactly what you do."

"That would be difficult, but the first thought in my heart when I look upon them is, 'These are the soul-gardens God has given me to tend; it is with me to make them fruitful:' then, for my first step, I try to make them feel that my heart is very, very, close to theirs. And I succeed."

I did not wonder at it, it would have been strange if she had not. I thought as I looked at her eager face,

this is what God means by "Do it with thy might." Earnestness is to thrill through every fibre of our being. No half-service, but whole, hearty, rendering up of ourselves to the work. Chrissie's intensity of Christian life made me feel the puny ambition of my own. My dreams were fast sinking into the one idea, "I must work to live, therefore I live to work." And, my friends, this is no uncommon experience of human nature; our glowing altar fires do often go out when the hand-to-hand struggle commences, when life means work, no matter whether in sickness or health. I tell you it is little wonder if such is the case, and only God can help us to overcome the crushing, quenching, power of this daily wear and tear of life.

The schools discussed, Chrissie began in a coaxing tone, "Now, Maggie, you must not be cross or distressed about it, but we are going to have a visitor."

"Why should I be? True, I should have preferred

having you to myself, but who is it?"

"Your old enemy, Alex da Costa. Philip met him a few days ago, and he so pleaded for permission to come and see us, that it is settled he is to come to-morrow."

"Shall you like it?" I asked, reading her face as she answered me. "Shall you have no compunction,

or will you not feel awkward in meeting?"

"No. He is nothing to me now, excepting a remembrance; yet I suffered so bitterly, for a length of time, after I knew that my love had been given in vain. Oh, Maggie, it did seem so dreadfully hard then, but now I see God's goodness."

"'Let bygones be bygones' is evidently your motto," I answered, as I thought how this man was continually crossing my path. It seemed as if fate, or Providence, decreed our seeing each other under all sorts of

circumstances.

It was evidently no use being discomfited, so I

accepted the fact, as gracefully as I could.

The next morning I received a line from Mrs. Harwood, saying Fred was worse, that he sent his love to

me, and a message so tenderly brotherly that I have kept her letter until now. The boy missed my singing, wished I could be with him, and have my holiday as well. All this—and more—"Say I cannot be any-

thing great now, but I am resigned."

Resigned! My bonnie, laughing, Fred to go down to the darkness of the grave just when life was at its sunniest! I felt as if everything happy died, while others were obliged to live on! Nay, but it was not really thus, it was a pure, brave, spirit going to God.

Alex came. Those two words are the keynote to much of my after life. Aunt Isobel received him with cold courtesy, Philip with a friendly greeting, Chrissie as Moey's echo, and I ——

Well, it is often so; we meet our best gifts as though they were matters of indifference to us; it is so hard to realise that our enemies may grow into our choicest friends.

How we skated that month! my bonnie, wee, baby often held aloft on Philip's or Alex's shoulders as we went. More often upon that of the latter, for Philip seemed ever intent upon his ministerial duties; then what walks we took together, along the hard, frosty, roads, coming back with appetites almost unappeasable when we sat down to a well-spread table.

It is no wonder that people take such different views of life, for it presents itself under so many aspects. Life, when it is "grind, grind, grind," seems a thing far from desirable; when it is seen beneath a clear, frosty sky, with no present care weighing us down, with merry chatter and pleasant laughter swelling on the air, it grows a thing of beauty and a joy for ever.

We went to Chrissie's model school, saw the practical result of her teaching in the orderly, well-trained, children who really loved her; and the thought grew, aye stronger and stronger, in my heart, that after all the gist of life was living for others.

As I write this story many a face rises before me, the owners of which were once scholars in Chrissie's class, and by the memory of those faces I say to you, teachers, work on and never be discouraged. Carry in your heart the noblest of ideas, that this is not work done for life, but for eternity.

I had been at home exactly a week when I received a telegram from Mr. Harwood. It read thus: "Please

come at once; I will defray all expenses."

"Fred wants me, I am sure," I said, as Chrissie read the words. "I must go to him. I did not think they would send for me, and I felt so sure I should never see him again on earth."

"You will come back," Chrissie said, as I hastily threw a few things together preparatory to starting for

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"Yes; as soon as I can," I answered, chokingly, for the thought was coming straight home to me, that soon, in a few hours, perhaps, I should see him for the last time.

There was no need to feel the sorrow of his deathbed scene, except for the relatives. As I entered the house, Clemence Harwood met me. Wringing my hand, he said, "You are good. I was afraid you would not come. He is always wishing you were here."

Taking off my hat and mantle, I put it on a chair, and entered the room. A solemn hush was over it. The angels' wings were sweeping very low over the face of Fred, but there was no anguish of pain upon it, for the numbness of death was creeping over every limb.

Before I could reach him he looked his bright welcome; then, as I went to his side, greeted me with the words, "Ah! yes; you've come; I thought you would."

"Fred!" was the only word I could whisper as I bent over him.

"Don't give way, Miss da Costa," he said, in a

faint echo of his old ringing voice. "It is not hard to die. I was afraid of the last, but you see there is nothing to be afraid of."

There was an unearthly stillness over the room, for

I could make no response.

"I want you to sing for me," he entreated.

Then I found my voice: "Fred, I cannot; it would

break my heart."

"No, it will not," he said; and there was a glad vibration in his voice as he said, "Sing 'Oh, love of God, how broad! how high!" and I sang it, with a heart worn with pain, his hand tightly clasped in mine. Then I kissed him, passionately and tenderly, as a woman would a much-loved brother. He smiled into all our faces, then finished it in heaven.

## CHAPTER XXX.

# I TRY MY HAND AT NEW WORK.

# "In all labour there is profit."

THE world is not only a charnel-house of dead hopes and lost loves, therefore, why should I dwell upon our desolation when it resulted in Fred's glorification? After all, it was only an exchange—heaven's singing for the poor melodies of earth—yet, with all this, partings are ever sad, and mournfulness lingers with the word farewell.

I went back to finish my holidays, my heart saddened, yet methinks wiser for the sorrow. I was getting many a peep behind the curtain of life, seeing how desolation comes to all, and it was teaching me what a false light I had thrown upon my own cares.

Daily I saw how grand a thing it would be for Philip when Chrissie married him; or rather when he married her. Some women seem born for noble helpmeets, and Chrissie was one of these; she did not look upon married life as one long honeymoon in which all cares would fade away; she viewed it as girls should before entering upon its pains as well as its joys. She knew that God sent us into the world to toil as well as rejoice, to bear as well as to do, to learn to act the noble things of which heaven's happiness will chiefly consist; and Chrissie craved no dreamlife, but a real, hearty, earnest, one, full of doing as

well as being.

Little happened during my holidays, excepting the intense enjoyment of them. Alex da Costa came to stay with us, and I almost forgot, at times, that he was the interloper whose birth had robbed us of our inheritance. The Hollow seemed part of a far-off life, so quickly do we grow accustomed, if not reconciled, to the habits which we are obliged to make a part I grew cheerful, even happy, during of ourselves. those days, and looked at life from a truer standpoint; comprehending that what we are, not what we have, is the best index to our sorrow or our joy. Alex rarely spoke of our old home, but he entered into our plans There was an and prospects as if he were one of us. essentially true ring about him, and it became a passport wherever he went. No one could doubt his good faith; I am sure deception, as a possession, was a thing unknown to him, he was so free from such in his own person that he scarcely even suspected it in others. Many a talk had we regarding the duties imposed upon us in our mutual work, for Alex was by no means lazy; he encouraged me to be strong in my endeavours, to make friends with my fellow-assistants. but found it impossible to induce me not to return to them.

In the mornings we used to climb to the top of the Werden mountains until we were thoroughly aglow with the exercise, and then pleasantly while away the afternoon in the pretty drawing-room, which Moey's fingers had once been so busy in decorating. The

sycamores and beeches no longer lovingly intertwined their branches, they stood out clear and bold, but leafless, against the wintry sky. Maggie was ever with us, she had grown a strong, healthful, baby, and we used to carry her in our arms for many a mile. If the inhabitants of Werden wondered why this child of mine did not need a nursemaid's care the fact never troubled me; my love for Moey's child was a shield between us and aught that they could say, and I know no greater safeguard against caring for Mrs. Grundy's opinion than having something which you really can love, and over which she cannot exercise her power. If households were full of affection, gossips would have a poor time of it, for there would be none to listen, none to care what was said. If pure love fills the heart there is no room for aught else, much more the listening to recitals of things which have given a human being pain, instead of that gift which we possess.

Philip used to laugh at me as I petted her, but she seemed perfectly unspoilable. By this I do not mean that she never tore her clothes, did not present herself to the public view with a very dirty face and a most unconcerned expression of countenance as she did so. Thank God, she never was a prim, proper, child, arrayed everlastingly in spotless frocks and pinafores, for such babies are always either ill, or drilled, becoming-most speedily-little angels or else crafty, cunning, children, developing into empty-headed women, to whom dress is a necessity of life, or else a thing to be detested. In the former case, working ill, and in the latter exaggerating a dislike for its childish primness into a general slovenliness, as difficult for outsiders to view with complacency as was the babyish cleanliness. Yes, most emphatically I thank God that my little Maggie was not a prim child! rather think she viewed a torn garment as a necessary to happiness, looking upon it as a sort of index to the good times she had been having; and, after all, which is best? Stitches with the addition of stout, healthy limbs or, very little sewing, with poor puny children to

put into the little dresses.

I hear some anxious mother say, "Ah, there was only one! If you had to take care of my six or seven." Yes, I hear you, and I know, fully, the amount of labour such a life as yours entails, yet look forward. helpless babies will some day mean six stalwart sons and daughters, and if you mean these children to be yours, then, as surely as when you first take them, in their helplessness, upon your knee, I beseech you to give them freedom. The liberty bounded by nothing, excepting such things as are wrong, then they will grow as all good things of God's do grow, if man puts no tampering finger upon them, fair and pleasant both to your own heart, and to the world! When children grow into manhood or womanhood, then pass on to old age, it is good if they can say of their childhood, "With home we left the best of life behind us!"

Maggie never forgot her childhood! it was so free, so pure, so bright! It made up for many an after-sorrow. Looking back—and that is the test for most things—I have never once regretted the love I lavished upon her.

I went again to my duties comforted. The office routine seemed quite different, but I missed Fred almost every hour of the day. Mr. Harwood could not suit himself with a clerk, and his work grew upon his hands until he seemed utterly unable to do it.

First of all he engaged one who adopted the notion that, if he sat and looked at it long enough, the work would accomplish itself. He was a great dandy also, and wore his collar à la Byron, with a great expanse of shirt front, looked unutterable things at the young ladies engaged behind the counter, and altogether was an idle, good-for-nothing fellow who wanted his daily bread without the trouble of earning it.

The second was better; he did his work quickly and

well, showing an aptitude for business that greatly delighted Mr. Harwood, who, too soon, congratulated himself upon the fact of his troubles being at an end concerning this matter. He had been with us about two months when Mr. Harwood went through the books, and finding several overdue accounts he sent Mr. Duke out on a collecting expedition.

Closing time came, yet he failed to return; nine, ten, eleven, o'clock, still the same result, he was absent. We all began to think it serious, and Mr. Harwood said, "I shall go out of the business soon, my dear, for these worries are too much for me. Clem

can manage them better than I."

We sat in the dining-room talking until we actually worked ourselves into the belief that Mr. Duke had collected the moneys and departed. When I say we, I must except Clem, for he argued that some accident might have happened, saying, "The fellow had a good character; at least, he had a capital one as to his honesty. It is not likely he would run away with a hundred pounds or so, when he could easily steal thousands. If he has been all day collecting it, he won't have had time to go very far. Still, if it will ease your mind, father, I will go to the police-station, and tell Inspector Fryer that the man is missing, and we need lay no charge, only simply hear what he thinks it best for us to do."

Clem started, and we sat over the fire raking up all the old stories of robberies we knew, until the man's guilt, to our minds, became a certainty, and his innocence an extreme improbability. Then Clem came in; we looked up in eager inquiry, but he read our faces too well. "Tried, convicted, and sentenced from the feminine point of view, while very little doubt as to his guilt dwells in the masculine mind," he said, meanwhile turning out a small bag of gold upon the table.

"Did you catch him?" queried Mrs. Harwood; womanlike, rushing to the conclusion that our sur-

mises had been correct, and the money was an evidence of it.

"Yes; he was very easy to catch, for he was lying quite still. It did not take much effort," answered

Clem, with a sort of scorn in his voice.

This was one of the worst traits of his character, a sneering superciliousness at the weaknesses of others. "They were anticipating your wishes when I reached the police-station, for two policemen were engaged in wheeling him up to the door on a sort of hand-barrow affair; but this was not for purloining valuables or moneys, but for being drunk and incapable. Mr. Fryer gave me up the account book, and the money, when I explained matters to him, and all the payments are entered in the book in a most methodical fashion, tallying to a penny with the contents of the bag."

Thus again we were without a clerk, while Mr. Harwood, Clemence, and I, shared the extra toil. I kept the cash-book—now balanced to a penny—dissected the goods sold, and copied up the journal into the day-book, entered the invoices and various other minor matters, until the amount of work accomplished made the days literally speed themselves away, leaving me astonished at the rapidity with which time

passed.

Mr. Harwood worked unceasingly, for the spring season was commencing, and, with us, it was no sinecure; night after night he stayed in the office until midnight, sometimes even remaining there during the dinner hour, or, if not doing this, going away directly after. I was beginning to grow more at home with the Harwoods; sometimes, about an hour after dinner, I would take a cup of tea downstairs into the office so that it might refresh him. One evening Mrs. Harwood had a lady friend dining with her, and Mr. Harwood, pleading business, did not come up to dinner at all. I was sitting in my own little room, Miss Hamilton with me, when his wife came in saying, "Could you help them a little, Miss da Costa? Clem

is at work to-night with his father; they say the accounts must be done each day, and this one's sales have been particularly heavy."

"Give me a cup of tea for him, Mrs. Harwood, and I will go downstairs, and if there is anything I can do

I will do it," was my answer.

She did as I requested; when I entered the office door I hardly knew how I should be able to keep my promise of helping, and as little did I know that I was

going to take another step in life.

Mr. Harwood was posting the day-book items into the ledger, while Clem was attending to a heap of business correspondence. I watched them both, then, half-irresolute, I said to Mr. Harwood, "Let me try if I can help you; I have seen it done so often, that I am sure I could keep that ledger."

He laughed, answering as he did so, "It is not so easy a task as it looks," but growing more in earnest I persuaded him to let me try it, urging, "It will be easy for you to run through the first few pages after me, and if I can do them correctly, I shall also be able

to manage the others."

He yielded, so I sat down at his desk, the huge ledger before me, upon the pages of which I was, in the future, to make so many entries. For the first half-hour he watched me, then went upstairs leaving me to my self-appointed task, one which was to lead to far greater results than I anticipated.

### CHAPTER XXXI.

### ALEX DA COSTA'S LETTERS.

"THOSE entries are splendidly made, Miss da Costa. You write a good, legible, hand, and your figures, ununlike those of most ladies, are intelligible," was

Clemence Harwood's remark, as he scanned the work

at which I had laboured for the past two hours.

This commendation was endorsed by his father, therefore it may be no revelation to you that ere another month had passed I was given the original occupation of Mr. Holden, and another cashier took my place in the old desk. My duties became onerous and confidential, yet, with their ever-increasing care, I found no reason to regret having taken them.

I will make a little home for myself, I argued. When Chrissie is married Aunt Isobel shall come to live with me, and we will be happy, no matter how hard the toil of my work becomes. I grew cheerful as as I thought of it, for, my friends, it is not a hard task to be thus when prospects are brightening; it is the reverse when clouds are gathering their blackness,

and lowering over us.

In addition to this piece of good fortune, I was learning to think of my father as ever near to comfort, to love, and to bless me. I used to dwell upon the thought, even as I do now—Would my darling think it right for me to do this or that? and to this day I think that next to coveting the loving gaze of God's pure eyes, there is nothing so ennobling as feeling our dead always near us. It was about this time that I began to have the consciousness that he was not far from me, that the "great cloud of witnesses" encompassing earth's wearied ones embraced him. Thus my life grew nearer to God, through his child, as one grows nearer a mother who possesses some darling who has won our love.

I made my proposal to Aunt Isobel, and it was accepted, with the proviso that no change should be made until after Chrissie's marriage, when we were to take a small house, furnish it sparingly, yet, as far as possible, comfortably, and settle down to the quiet existence which two women must ever know when

they live alone.

These were now my dreams! No longer the roseate

ones of girlish glamour and glitter, but the woman's longing for quiet rest; for a home in which I could find peace after the labour of the day. And my work was no sinecure, it was real toil for bread. When I hear my sisters talking of woman's rights—i.e., her ability to stand in the front ranks of those who labour for the meat that perisheth—I think of the hours in which I grew weary, and I pity those who ask this right (?) of toil for us.

A placid content steals over me as I think of the after-rest which came, and I cease to grieve over the past, even while I deplore the fact that other women are searching after the trials from which I fain would have escaped. My literary efforts had been so futile, that I used to speak against it, as a profession, exactly after the same manner one would speak of slow starvation; forgetful of the truth that although it is an

arduous path, it is still one worth travelling.

Before leaving Werdon to resume my duties at Mr. Harwood's establishment, I had been asked by Alex da Costa to correspond with him. Not in so many words, but the request was inferred when he told me that he purposed travelling through England, Scotland, and Ireland for the increase of his knowledge concerning these countries. We had been chatting one evening, when I inadvertently said, "I wish you would make notes of your journeyings, and favour me with a perusal of them."

His face flushed with pleasure at my request and, after once making the admission that they would be of interest to me, I could hardly refuse when he asked,

"May I write to you concerning them?"

For a moment or two I was annoyed with myself, as I have ever held the opinion that it is not a good thing for two young persons of different sexes to use themselves to the practice of writing to each other. Unless there is a bond of affection, or rather love, existing between them, it too often leads to misapprehension on one side or the other; but having com-

mitted myself, by thus expressing my wishes, I could only waive my objections, and consent to receive my cousin's letters. How I learnt to value them you will understand when I tell you that I have every line he ever wrote to me. First of all they contained no word such as he might not have written for the perusal of the whole world. The first one in which I discerned a difference was dated from Cox's Hotel, Youghal, in which he gave me a description of his visit to Mount Mellery. After describing its ruins and scenery, with the wonderful beauty of the road from Lismore to Cappoquin, which stretches along beside the Blackwater, and further dilating on the loveliness of its glens, he described the monastery, which is of the order of La Trappe, with particulars concerning its inmates. I have been reading the letter over to-day, and will transcribe a portion of it. Alex wrote:— "One of the holy (?) brotherhood was deputed to attend me through the sacred edifice. The first department visited was a long passage, with a multitude of doors on either side. On several conspicuous places boards with the word 'silence' were suspended. I quickly learned the meaning of this by not receiving any answer to some of my questions. My interesting companion was swathed in a brown baize wrapper, which reached down to his shoes; his' hair was cropped as close as a ticket-of-leave-man's, and, as far as possible, concealed from the eyes of the inquisitive by a hood, thrown back on the shoulders Like Elijah of old, he had a leather when alone. girdle about his waist. All my inquiries failed to elicit from him what was his meat. He had a cold in his head, which, together with his sighs, uttered at about every fourth expiration of his breath, gave him a rather forlorn aspect. I next visited their chapel, where my heresy was evident when my guide found himself singular in sprinklings and in somewhat decorous genuflexions, first, before the image of St. Joseph, then, with a comparative degree of devotion, before

the centre altar, and finally, with superlative unction, before the image of Mary. I was further shown the dining-hall, where, on a plain deal table, was laid for each brother, his knife, fork, spoon, earthenware jug, and cellar of salt, together with some bread. I here made a suggestion as to the inadequacy of such food to produce developments so colossal as that of some of the brotherhood, and inquired to what uses the knives and forks were put, but silence was again the order of the day. We next visited the dormitory, constructed like berths in a plunge bath-room, and having a curtain in front of each.

"The occupants are said to rise at two o'clock a.m., but seeing my attendant hastily pull one of the curtains to hide the interior, I was led to imagine that

one of the fraternity had overslept himself.

"I put what I considered some pertinent questions. to which a mumble was the invariable style of reply. I was then brought into the visitors' room, where I was meekly initiated into the fact that frequently Protestants are accommodated with the hospitality of the monastery; and lastly, I visited the receptionrooms, upon whose walls sundry notices as to the pecuniary necessities of the order—and its dependence on the charity of that world which they would fain abandon—were posted. After offering some slight remuneration to them for the trouble I had given, I was affectionately pressed to remain to breakfast, or to take wine with them; but this I did not do. not aim at giving you a description of the scenery down to Youghal, as I am sending you a little handbook, which does so, far more efficiently than I can hope to do. How often I have thought of our walks in Werdon, and wished you could be my companion The old church is such a curiosity, and I know your fondness for antiquities. It contains monuments. in all directions, which are many centuries old. oak roof of the building is upwards of six hundred years of age.

"I mean to leave for Cork this evening, and, if possible, go on to Glengariff on Monday or Tuesday. I half wish I could put myself in this letter, if only to exchange the greetings of friendship with you; but perhaps I am saved pain by being unable to do so, for it hurts me even to think of the work you are daily accomplishing, while I have leisure to travel as you used to dream of doing. Maggie, if you would only take half! Ah! I remember you said I was never to touch upon this wish again. It is an ever-present grief to me that you will not entertain the idea. Yesterday I met a friend of yours. He tells me he was organist at H----, when you were all living there. What a brave, bright Christian Moey must have been! He, Mr. Power, was full of the noble work done by you, all, when resident in that town. He says you were a wonderful worker among the little ones, but that was no cause for surprise with me, remembering, as I do, your affection for Maggie."

I recall, as if it were yesterday, reading this letter to Miss Hamilton. I also vividly call to mind the glow at my heart as I learnt how he wished for my

companionship.

Yet with all this, love is a hard thing to understand; we are such contradictions to ourselves about it. I did not even guess that these missives were to be my landmarks as to time and days! How should I?

As I finished reading his letter, somehow eight lines came into my mind with reference to the work of which he spoke—

"Rest is not quitting
The busy career,
Rest is the fitting
Of self to one's sphere.
'Tis loving and serving
The highest and best,
'Tis onward unswerving—
And this is true rest."

These were the words he had once repeated to me, and now their meaning was coming home.

I said something of this sort to Miss Hamilton, and she answered, "Yes; once *fitted*, all goes well, but it is the squeezing one's self *in* that is the worst process. It is so hard to believe that God's way is a better one than ours. So hard!"

I thought of the days of my life at the Hollow, then of those spent in my desk, and tried to fancy if I would barter my experiences for a life of ease and luxury. Discerning the way in which God had led me through the—

"Infinite passion and the pain Of finite hearts that yearn,"

I, for the first time, felt inclined to own that my hard life was, perhaps, better for me than the slothful one of a child of luxury and ease.

Do not misunderstand me. I am not speaking against the lives of those who "toil not, neither do they spin," for the sake of the bread they must eat; for I know, well, that many daughters of wealthy homes do work for the good of others, which is often, to the full, as irksome as that which England's poorer daughters are compelled to do, and also that they undertake these labours for love's sake. But I know that without God's discipline I should never have been one of these. I was too indolent, self-seeking, and wayward! God saw far when He bereaved me of the things which would have been as fatal to my growth—real growth—as dwelling in a land of lotuseaters, where the deadly breath of its air enervates, instead of invigorates.

Yes, I was growing nearer God when I learnt to wish for my father's eyes to be ever upon me, and still nearer when I owned that He had dealt justly with me in apportioning to my lot toil instead of ease.

One day I had just received a long budget from Alex, when Mrs. Harwood entered my sitting-room. Coming in without knocking, she found me with the closely-written pages lying upon my lap. She knew the handwriting, and with one of her peculiar smiles

said, "Your cousin is a most voluminous writer, Miss da Costa."

"Yes." Then, with a smile, I read over to her passages of his letter containing vivid descriptions of his travels.

"Is it not strange he does not marry? He is in a

position to do so, and is old enough."

The hot colour rushed into my face as she turned her scrutinising eyes upon it; but this was the only sign I gave, for I did not feel inclined to answer her question. She went on, "I used to fancy he had a penchant for Miss Bowers, but I suppose you know if such is the case or not?"

"I know nothing," I answered steadily, and resolutely, for I could see she was striving to read my face, although I did not then understand her motive for

making these remarks.

"I like young men to settle early," she continued. "It steadies them. I should wish to see Mr. da Costa married, just as I wish to see Clemence in a like position, for I take a great interest in him."

"Indeed," I answered, "I think they neither of them need any steadying, for they are both wonder-

fully staid for young men."

"You think so?" she continued. "So do I; but for all that I should like to see Clemence married."

"He will be likely to marry some day," I said, for I

could not understand the drift of her remarks.

"I hope so; I would like him to marry some girl of good family, and it would not matter if she had no money, for he will have sufficient for both," she finished, with conscious pride, as if this were a fact to glory in.

"Perhaps he may marry both birth and money," was my cool answer, for the subject did not interest me

much.

"I do not think he will," she said, preparing to go out of the room. "But I shall tell him not to allow. any correspondence between—cousins."

This final remark left me in a state of great per-

plexity, for her look, as she said it, spoke more than the words she used. I was dumb-foundered; but I again read Alex's letter, and forgot my annoyance in the interest of its pages, until a sudden thought flashed over me, "I wonder, does Alex write to Miss Bowers, that Mrs. Harwood spoke to me as she did?"

I was fairly walking into the spider's web, even before I was conscious of the spider's existence. As little did I dream that some day Alex and I would go together

over every spot of which he wrote.

### CHAPTER XXXII.

#### MISS BOWERS.

"Believe a woman or an epitaph, Or any other thing that's false."

BYRON.

This short conversation with Mrs. Harwood was the beginning of another trouble for me. She proved herself as false as she was unwomanly. As I had previously written to Chrissie, my views of her had changed after our first acquaintance, and I was learning—against my better judgment—to like her. Once liking a woman the next step is to trust her; and, alas! I fell into Mrs. Harwood's snare, and positively placed confidence in her.

After the night upon which she so mystified me, about Clemence, I determined that she should possess no reasonable ground for contemplating a marriage between us; that this was her intention I soon discovered. More than this, he himself gave colour to the fiction, by paying me every kind of courtesy and attention, thoroughly distinct from that required by our business routine. Also we were constantly thrown together, my removal to the inner office bringing me in regular contact with him.

With all my experiences of life, I have not yet compassed the power of reading the motives of a thoroughly deceitful woman, neither do I think any pure-minded woman ever capable of reading such an one. I shall therefore show you the actual deeds of Mrs. Harwood and Miss Bowers, leaving you to judge, for yourselves, how their action altered the tenor of my life.

I gave my confidence to the former; it was transmitted to, and acted upon, by the latter! You must bear in mind that Alex and I were not declared lovers, or this could never have taken place. Had we been openly affianced, or had any mutual pledge of love been given, I should most certainly have demanded, and received, an explanation of the falsehood inferred and told to me by both of these women. First of all, had such been the case, I should have desired him to give up his correspondence with Miss Bowers, when her untruthfulness would, at once, have become apparent.

As it was, we laboured mutually under the disadvantage of neither knowing each other's feelings or real affections, and it is utterly impossible, also incompatible with good taste, for any girl to ask an explanation of a thing concerning which she has not the supreme right to dictate. Of all these drawbacks I was fully aware. Thus, while I had no tenable grounds for complaint against Alex, his conduct caused me much pain.

As I have told you, before, this is a true story, so I cannot gloss over the conduct of Mrs. Harwood, but will proceed to give you a straightforward account of the fashion in which she worked me both grief

and wrong.

For three months Alex and I kept up an uninterrupted correspondence, then a break occurred. In answer to my letter no further one came from him, and by this time I had begun to look for them as naturally as I did for my daily bread. I waited a fortnight—it seemed to me the longest I had ever known—then I wrote again; a short note this time, inquiring if my letter had reached him. No reply came!

"At least he might have treated me as a lady," I argued to myself. "He might, at any rate, have made an excuse." Thus I prejudged him; perhaps not altogether as I should have done had not Mrs. Harwood asked me several questions about him, which compelled me to discover to her my ignorance of my cousin's movements. With a woman's instinct of defending those she loves, I yet hid from her how much his neglect pained me, even while I was soothed with her affected interest in us.

She seemed to drop all notion of Clem's attentions being anything but those of a friend, and by so doing considerably relieved my mind of this source of trouble.

A lull came into my life. Several months passed without incident, until July found me still working hard, and thoroughly fagged with my office work. The half-yearly bills had been, in spite of Mr. Harwood's fears, heavier than usual; consequently much nightwork was entailed upon me. Once this was over, the reaction set in! It was a strange life for a girl to live, vet in it I had as many chances of happiness-nay more!-than if I had been drifting idly, and thoughtlessly, down the current of life. I need not have been lonely; for once installed in the office, I came in contact with some of our wealthiest and best customers. who forgot their conventionality in their heart, and positively invited me to visit them at their houses. However, upon this point I remained firm. I would not visit them, for equality of position is a grand essential in friendship. This opinion I held in my youth, and it is one for which I have no regret now. Acquaintanceship I never desired; and friendship must be built upon a very firm basis, so that there may exist on neither side the power to look down. I could not enter their houses as an equal, so I stayed at my work. finding all my pleasure in it, and in the letters from Werdon.

It wanted only a month to Chrissie's wedding, to which I was looking forward as affording a break in the routine of business, when Mrs. Harwood announced to me that she purposed inviting a number of friends to a picnic, which she intended giving in the course of a week or two.

She asked me to aid her in the task of preparation, also to accompany her party upon the appointed day.

Entering fully into her projects, I made a list of everything likely to be wanted, wrote the invitations, and finally became one of a committee of three for the discussion as to the ways and means of conveying the party to Boldre Wood.

Distinctly, as if but yesterday, that eventful evening

stands forth in my mind.

We were all talking together, Mrs. Harwood, Miss Bowers, and I, when a pause gave the former an opportunity of planting further seeds of distrust towards Alex in my mind.

She said, with a smile—how is it women always smile when they sting one another?—"If only we could get your cousin for the day, Miss da Costa?"

I made no answer. It was Miss Bowers who replied, "That would be impossible; he is in Donegal. Even if we telegraphed for him, he could not arrive in time."

I could not control my start of astonishment, as she so coolly named the last place of his location, for Chrissie had written to me only the day before—"Alex will not be home for our wedding. He is at Ballyshannon, and will proceed from thence to Londonderry—at least, that is the news we received from him about a week ago. He sent his love to all, naming no one in particular."

Miss Bowers proceeded, blandly, as if the matter was an every-day occurrence, saying, "I heard from him on Tuesday, and he has no intention of returning home for the next twelve months. He is evidently en-

joying himself amazingly."

"Miss da Costa has not heard from him for some weeks?" interpolated Mrs. Harwood. Yet I made no answer, for the truth was dawning upon me that he could not correspond freely with girls so entirely opposite in character as Miss Bowers and I.

"Have you not?" queried she, with eyebrows slightly raised, and an expression of languid indifference upon her face. "Alex is very lazy." How glibly the Christian name slipped off, like a well-conned lesson, or a word which daily use had made

familiar!

"He was not lazy at Werdon," I answered, as her remark stung me; "he could be called any other name

with more appropriateness."

"Could he?" still with the nonchalance of familiarity, as if she had the right to discuss his peculiarities. "Well, I suppose I ought not to complain; he does not neglect me;" and she drew from her pocket a letter, the handwriting of which I knew only too well. As she opened it my eye caught the name appended, as well as the conclusion—"Yours very faithfully and affectionately, Alex."

That was all; but a mistiness came over my eyes, so that the figures in the room became indistinct, while one voice seemed to fill it, the tones of which I

shall hear for ever.

"It will be no breach of confidence to read his letter to a cousin," she said, as in her clear voice she read

the lines his hand had transcribed.

I see her at this moment as I saw her when the mist cleared away from my eyes; and because the Scriptural injunction is still with us, "Love your enemies," I will try and write of her less bitterly than I feel, trusting that God has given me strength to forgive her the evil she wrought me.

She was all pink and white! Her complexion was this, her dress, her style—all prettiness from begin-

ning to end; but the outside loveliness was all the beauty she had. Possessed of no heart, she must have fancied all women like her, or she would never have stooped so low to wring mine as she did. I have paused in my task of penning this story, and asked for strength to write it, in its truth, with no word of fiction in it, so that I may see it with pure eyes, beholding in its pages nothing amiss—naught that in old age or death I could desire to be blotted out.

Remember, I had long ago ceased to be a sentimental girl, looking for love as the grand consummation of life—i.e., wedded love. With all this I had a human heart, perhaps more womanly because less romantic; yet this girl set herself to trample upon it as if it were stone, instead of a throbbing one of flesh and blood.

She sat there in her low chair, the picture of happiness and health, draped in her dainty muslins and prettinesses, while I sat in my chair, clothed in the sable garments of mourning, which were so fit an emblem of the difference existing between us. She read the letter to me, I listening as a prisoner might listen to his doom, stolidly indifferent outwardly; inwardly, trying to stem my pain. Here is the letter. Contrast it with the one I have given you which was penned to me, and say if he loved either best, and if so which of us?

She read it aloud, a smile upon her face as she did so—one which, even then, seemed to me a copy of Mrs. Harwood's.

"'My dear Emily,—I was very glad to receive the papers and hear the latest family news.' "I told him about Chrissie's approaching marriage," she said as she read this portion of her letter. I smiled bitterly in reply to her remark, for I had told him of this event, and in addition had also sent him various home papers. She continued to peruse it, reading it aloud, whilst I only interrupted her once. As the strange-

ness of her knowledge struck upon me, I asked, "Who told you about my cousin's marriage?" (For the life of me I could not have called her Chrissie to Miss Bowers.)

"Mrs. Harwood, of course," she laughed; "no

secrets exist between friends."

"Go on," I said, with a chilliness of demeanour that I could hardly control. "Let us hear of the doings

and journeyings of our traveller."

So she continued: "'I have been almost everlastingly on the move since writing from Ballyshannon;" -a week ago, I mused; he was there, according to Chrissie's letter, exactly seven days before; they must be very constant in their epistles to each other-"'that I have been obliged to delay until this evening giving you an account of my proceedings. We arrived in Donegal about half-past two on Monday last, and after dinner Mr. Power and I called to see an old friend of mine—he was at college with me, as well as at Eton. We then took a long walk, in his company, about the suburbs of Donegal, which is, indeed, as beautifully situated a town as any I have previously In whichever direction we wandered the scenery was delightful; on all sides magnificent slopes and hills, while fields of fresh-mown grass made the air so fragrant that city reminiscences seemed a dese-High mountains extending from the west (some of them upwards of two thousand feet high) round in a kind of circle to the eastward, with the great gap of Barnes, in the centre, dividing the mountains to their very base. In the valley between the town on the north, and these mountains, sleeps the lovely Lough Eske, with the richly-planted demesnes of Mr. Brooke extending along its shores. On the south-west the Bay of Donegal, with its almost numberless islands, some of them under pasture, with flocks and herds fattening themselves in their sea-girt Other islands, nearly circular, covered with timber and undergrowth, give a pleasant change for 18-2

the eye, while in the far distance the high mountains of Mayo dimly show themselves, and on the south Benbulben mountains, in the county of Sligo, raise their crested, hoary, heads to help form the cradle of my ancestors, for you must know my mother was of Irish extraction, though born in Yorkshire. nesday we started for Killybegs, where we remained until Thursday evening; so in the morning we ascended Slieve League, and from it saw some of the wild, grand coast scenery for which Donegal is famous. We then crossed the "One Man's Path," the sea on one side; and the lake on another at a depth of one thousand nine hundred feet below. We purpose going on to Enniskillen to-morrow, of which I will send you full and particular accounts. Meantime, "Goodnight." I wish I could dare repeat to you how I long for your presence."

I listened to no more, for the truth forced itself upon me. This man, in whose good faith I had learnt to place implicit trust, was unworthy of it, for he was playing one game with two girls, and making the same assertions to both. I never thought of questioning the truthfulness of a woman who was deceitful to the very core, while I doubted a man whose every action was a noble one, and actuated by truest principles.

### CHAPTER XXXIII.

#### THE PIC-NIC.

THE day of the proposed pic-nic came, and we started off on our excursion, apparently as gay a party as could be desired.

But the issues of the month, in which it took place, were not all so gay as was the weather. A clear sky over-head, light hearts, and youth seem to comprise all the needful of outdoor enjoyment, but when the heart is heavy it shuts the door upon outer influences.

Mrs. Harwood and Miss Bowers had taken away my powers of enjoyment by the seeds of distrust sown. Upon the morning of that July day I received a newspaper, directed to me by Alex, containing a most able article on Irish Tenantry. He had taken a sensible, practical, view of their need of outer aid to make them respectable and well-to-do, as are the greater portion of our English labourers; of the stimulus needed by them to transform a lazy, shiftless, lounger into an intelligent, industrious, workman, and in addition to this had touched upon some of the vexed questions of the day, notably the one of the power of ejectment. I read the article, a glow of intense pride thrilling my heart when I saw in it the evidence of a cool brain and manly judgment, but the glow died away as I recalled the fact that it is so much easier to write noble things than to act them.

For, to this day, I believe that no man is, really, noble when he is capable of wounding any woman's feelings after the fashion in which I had judged Alex He had implied love to me while he was corresponding with another in the same style as that adopted to me. In my heart I thanked God that twelve months must elapse before I should be compelled again to meet him. I would learn to forget, even as I had done in Philip's case. Ah, but in my first love I knew no such strength of affection as now! I had not been drinking of the best wine of life! addition to this there existed a sting for me in the very fact that I had previously believed Alex too true a friend to make any such professions as he had made to me, unless he was sincere when making them; it vexed me that I had so little powers of discrimination when selecting a friend.

Miss Hamilton had noticed my grieving, but, of course, I did not give her my confidence in this matter, for I felt it would necessarily be hurtful to

Alex, and conduce to no good ending. However, my dislike towards Miss Bowers was shared by her, and she took every opportunity of letting me know that such was the case.

Upon the morning of the pic-nic I was called into Mrs. Harwood's bed-room for some trivial business or other, and saw lying upon the dressing-table a letter directed to my cousin. After asking me a question concerning the safe bestowal of a hamper, she made the remark—pointing to the bulky epistle—with a shrug of her shoulders, "Another letter, you see; I tell Emily that there must be something at the root of all this writing, but she only looks mysterious, and keeps her own counsel. However, I suppose she will let us know in time to select our presents."

"Certainly; for you have promised me the dress, you know; have you not? I shall have a plain white silk, richly trimmed with the rarest of lace and ornamented with orange blossoms."

For the life of me I could not forbear answering her with the well-worn proverb, "There is many a slip between the cup and the lip."

Again that cold, cruel, smile came over her face as she rejoined, "Well, if we get the dress and this bridegroom slips, the article in question will be in readiness for the next."

It was no use making any comment after this; the girl was not worth it. I watched her during the day as she flirted with one and another of the company, until I said to myself, "And this is the sort of girl a noble man seeks to make his wife; he cannot, cannot, know!"

Clemence Harwood made one of the party, which was not a particularly large one, and he became so attentive that I grew alarmed, nor were my fears uncalled for; he explained to me how my conduct towards Fred had first attracted him, until he found out how strongly love was taking root; then he tried to persuade himself that I would consent to be his wife.

What lives of cross purposes we mortals live, beloved by those whose affection is naught to us, and loving those who are set far above our reach, either by the sins of others or shortcomings of our own! It was long before I could persuade Clemence that his suit was painful to me, yet at last I made him understand it, and then he asked if his previous conduct was influencing my decision. Things were moving towards the crisis, and I had no power to stay them.

Clemence left, and Miss Bowers attached herself to me, so that I found it impossible to rid myself of her company. As far as I can remember it, here is the conversation which took place. She commenced, "I am sorry I interrupted you; it seems to be my fate to spoil your tête-à-tête with lovers; I was once unlucky

in this fashion before."

"I do not remember the circumstance," I answered, haughtily. "It would be a difficult thing to meddle with a thing which does not exist."

"Don't be satirical," she went on. "You know I interfered once when you were engaged with Alex.

Did I not?"

"You certainly joined us, but I am not aware that you changed the topic of our conversation."

"But I did with Clemence Harwood?"

"Indeed," I responded to her questioning; "you are

giving me information."

She changed the subject then, asking me, "Who is this Mr. Power, Alex is always mentioning in his letters?"

"In his letters to you?" I queried.

Was it guilt swept over her face as she told the barefaced lie, "Yes"?

I do not know if it was triumph or guilt. I could not shake her off without absolute rudeness, so I tried to govern myself as I said, "He was a great friend of ours when we lived at H——. He was the organist, and he used to help us with many things in our schools, and in a variety of other ways."

" Nothing else?"

"What do you mean?"

"Was he a lover?"

"No; he had known too much of love before he met us," I answered, bitterly, for it seemed to me, just for a moment, as if love were the curse of the human race, instead of its blessing.

"I will show you how he makes mention of him—I mean Alex makes mention of Mr. Power, you know—in his last letter;" and again, out came the familiar

handwriting.

"Stay," I said, "I do not wish to hear it. I consider the reading of any person's letter, to a disinterested party, a breach of confidence, and, therefore, I prefer not to hear it."

"Don't be nonsensical; he is your cousin, so you may consider yourself an interested person, and thus listen to, and take an interest in, the things he writes."

I will not inflict upon you the reading of another of Alex's epistles, but leave you to surmise its import when I tell you that it made me unhappy for a longer time than the day upon which Miss Bowers read it to me. I had lost a friend; more than this, I had received the shock always consequent upon the removal of our trust from its quondam object. "I shall be really competent to write soon," I told myself, as I thought of Mr. Haverill's words, "The task is one of suffering as well as work; to write of the bitterness of life, you must drink deeply of its gall; to pen words of its strife, you dare do naught else than stand in the thickest of the fight; to comfort others, you must first have known the sorrow; to teach the lessons of life, you must first have learnt in its school."

Had I not taken deep draughts of life's gall? Had I not learnt the lessons of toil and suffering? Was I not, now, prepared to enter the list of those who penned words of consolation and hope to others?

Again, ah me! Was I learning all these lessons

aright?

 $\cdot$  I was rebelling even while nearing the goal. Two

or three days after the pic-nic, I had a private interview with Mr. Harwood, and refraining from saying any word respecting Clemence, I told my employer that my health demanded rest; therefore, I should be glad if he could get my place supplied for a few months. If he would consent to this, I promised to

return at the expiration of that time.

More motives than one influenced me when I made my request. My health was really failing me in a most alarming degree, and knowing the fatal tendency to consumption existing in our family, I was unfeignedly anxious to consult some eminent physician as to my own case. After severe labour I had several times suffered from nervous exhaustion to such a degree, that I could hardly rally from it, and this in spite of exercising the most constant care with regard to my health! It seemed as if no alternative remained but continued rest, until the vigour of my body was thoroughly restored.

Strangely enough, as my weakness forced itself upon me my hold upon life grew more tenacious. It seemed as if just when I grew more prosperous in providing for my bodily wants, God was going to take my life from me. When food was wanting, life was strong; then when I grew easy in circumstances, and the difficulties of it were surmounted, its hold grew

weaker and weaker, until I feared death.

Yes; I, a professing Christian, feared death, shrank from it as a great unknown enemy, instead of looking it fearlessly in the face as the gate which would let me into the fairest of cities where the body and soul need no providing for. I believe this dire dread was partly constitutional, for I ever shrank from the thought of the bodily anguish of the last hour; the fearful rending asunder of the soul and body; but it was also pregnant with the fear of entering into the presence of a sinless God who in His light—not in my own—would judge my whole life, unerringly and justly, yet withal—I thought—so sternly.

When I stood shivering and wet upon the bridge, crying out "Oh, God, I am so tired," my fear was swallowed up in a greater anguish of suffering, for I was a suspected, taunted, thief, who in the delirium of pain half forgot the dread of the great eternity.

Now I was free from all taint of suspicion, and my bread was sure, so the madness of pain had passed, leaving me no mental, passionate, sorrow from which

I had need to escape.

Mr. Harwood listened most patiently, then promised to keep my place open for me, should I be able to return in the course of three months, or at the end of that time. Bidding Miss Hamilton an affectionate farewell, and promising to write to the Harwoods, I left for Werdon. Once in the midst of my loved ones, I proved that my fears concerning my health were well grounded, for the change in my appearance evidently was, to them, most noticeable. Philip insisted upon my consulting a leading London physician, and then placing myself under his treatment. After some delay, for the expense was a matter of moment to me, I agreed to take advice, and so journeyed to London for As I have before mentioned, the this purpose. Haverills were living in one of its most charming suburbs, and they had invited me to make their house my home during the consultations. Thus, the day after Chrissie's marriage, I found myself duly installed in their family, with Mrs. Haverill as head, and Eva as deputy, nurse. I took up my old position in the household, occupying the same room in which I had uttered the cry of my agony, "Oh, Lord, Thou knowest." But now my constant prayer was an entirely different one; its burden being, "Spare my life a little longer."

Mrs. Haverill accompanied me to Dr. R——'s, and soon I knew the worst. At the same time I also learnt that with care, "great care," the doctor said, my life might be spared for many years. "You will need perfect rest, constant care, and the best of diets.

with change of air and scene. Come to me again on Friday; "so I paid him my fee—a guinea—mentally pondering how long my purse would stand the drain. Since then I have often wondered how these great men, whose fiat is life or death to their patients, would feel if they knew that the fees that they sometimes take from well-dressed, well-born, patients are the very life-blood of those who tender them. It is good that they do not know, for, after all, life has often been a sore struggle with them, and their fame would not console them for such bitter knowledge.

I went home and solemnly vowed my life to God, if He would spare it. Aunt Isobel came with me to the Haverills and showed me many kindnesses in a hundred different ways, but Eva was the one to whom my heart went out. She was so rarely tender and sympathetic towards me, that I trusted her implicitly. Together we talked of my literary efforts while she surprised me by showing her own; they were bright and happy, just such things as the world wants, no lingering echo of sadness playing about them, but a cheerful, happy, strain running through every page, like a sparkling brook in a pleasant land.

"This is not my 'Benjamin' now," she said, as she held up the piece of gold fastened to her chain. "My 'Benjamin' of latter growth is in the shape of a har-

monium in our new schools."

As she told me this I watched the glow upon her face, and knew that literature had proved a happier path to her than it had done to me. She had climbed with her eye fixed upon a goal. I had striven without this and failed.

### CHAPTER XXXIV.

#### MY BOOK AND EVA HAVERILL.

"And yet because thou overcomest so,
Thou canst prevail against my fears and fling
Thy purple round me, till my heart shall grow
Too close against thine heart henceforth to know
How it shook when alone."

E. BARRETT BROWNING.

In spite of the doctor's prophecies that he would, in a few months, restore me to perfect health, I yet never quite overcame my fears respecting death. Somehow, the notion worried me when I fancied how often doctors had found it easier to make promises to their

patients than to fulfil them.

He treated me by inhalation. I had a regular course of them, but the pain I constantly suffered led me to believe that all his remedies would prove unavailing, and that the constant anguish of my body must inevitably lead to the one result of its being utterly worn out. To any one who asks, "Can consumption be cured?" I unhesitatingly answer "Yes;" for the most skilled physician in the whole city gave me his verdict concerning my disease, yet I have no trace of it about me at this present time. Inhalation is the only cure for it, for it is the one means of causing the blood to be properly oxodised, and thus spitting of blood at once ceases. The medicine inhaled gets at the very root of the evil, by acting upon the diseased air tubes and cells.

I did not believe this at that time, and should have been much more satisfied if his treatment had been after the old-approved fashion of overdosing with physic the inhalation of which was as impossible as unnecessary. Thus I conceived a most fearful dread of death. I had time to look it in the face, with no

excitement to buoy me up, with all the feebleness of languor and pain to depress me; and I shrank from it as from an awful evil of which my soul had previously no knowledge. I was perplexed, uncertain, about the future, yet I wanted the light. I used to kneel at my bedside, in a state of mind most pitiable, unable to frame into words the anguish of my mind. Then I would crave, night after night, "Bear with me a little

longer, for Jesus Christ's sake."

For weeks this was the only petition I offered, "Bear with me." It seemed as if presently God would look down and let in His own light. I dreaded the intervention of man, shrank from it as one would recoil from the touch upon a sore wound! Thinking to myself how hard life grew, I hated to hear men bandy words about religion as if it were a profession or a trade, over which they might spend many words. and use their cant phrases, while to me it was a point that needed tenderest handling. I used to writhe in spirit as I heard the doctrines of Christ discussed—by lips drawn in and faces lengthened to the subject until my very soul cried out for the God of the Bible and not the God of sects. The souls that quibbled over doctrines and creeds were repulsive as hell itself. I wanted no laws by which we could define the exact position of every church—both worldly and social—I needed the great, grand, law of love, which should make all the members of one body move towards the central truth—"God is love," for to Him we find acceptance through His beloved. Released from dread, heaven opened, and the fear of death abolished.

Did I hear this? No.

The Haverills belonged to a sect whose religion was one of fear, not of love. I used to go to their chapel, and listen to denunciations such as devils, rather than angels, might have delighted in.

Yet I would find it in my heart to write tenderly of this denomination, for to some of its members I owe a gratitude so deep, that I pray God to repay a debt for which I have no language; neither have I power to discharge it in aught but love, for God does not always give it into our hands to repay His servants. The "cup of cold water" is rewarded in heaven, because it was done for His sake.

The other day I took up a volume of Ruskin's, and read these lines: "You might have cheered them in their race through the asphodel meadows of their youth; you might have brought the proud, bright scarlet into their faces, if you had but cried. 'Well done,' as they dashed up to the first goal of their early ambition. But now their pleasure is in memory, and their ambition is in heaven." I read thus far, when I felt the hot tears running down my face; for, although I did not institute a comparison between the noble natures of which Ruskin wrote and myself, I yet thought of the days when I put my heart into my pen, only to gain for its warmth the cold, nipping, blight of criticism from these people. Verging, as I thought, upon the great Eternity, I penned an outline of my life, told its secret joys and sorrows, believing that ere the public received it, I should be sleeping my last sleep. Freely, fully, and truthfully, I wrote, with many a sob in my heart, and many a prayer upon my lip, then lived to hear the sneers of these people as they perused the anguished expressions of my mind. and gave vent to their feelings in well-turned sentences of condemnation such as "far-fetched," "impossible." "romantic, but clever."

As if a woman had put her soul upon paper for their amusement!

Others went farther, smiled satirically, openly ridiculing the word-picture I had drawn, and said my writings were well meaning, &c., as if they were passing their remarks upon the actions of a little child, or a favourite kitten's antics, instead of upon the anguish and joy of a human soul.

Yet these did not move me as did the contemptuous expression of the older members of this Church. They

called my views "bold and insolent," giving me no

garland of praise for my offering.

Summed up, the matter rested thus. I had fulfilled my early promise—the one of which Mr. Haverill had spoken—I had given to the world all the dictates of my heart to find its laurel crown was sharper than one of thorns.

True, the Press had praised it, lauded the freedom of its style, the justice of its views; but this was not the thing I needed. Shall I let you, my readers, into a little secret? Yes. Then here it is. A true woman never breaks her heart over anything the Press gives or withholds, but if her friends give her blame, instead of praise, then she suffers. Once she has truly gauged the value of the world's encouragement, she never again seeks it. It is to her readers, her friends, she looks for sympathy and love. Their tears are her tears; their laughter her joy; their honour her pride; and no exaltation of the world can make up the lack of this.

Eva Haverill was ever ready with her loving sympathy, teaching me how to bear as well as work; how to "labour and to wait."

Ah me! but the waiting was so hard! One evening Eva came in to me—I had been with the Haverills almost three months—and seeing the pain I was suffering, she urged me to take more rest. Then I burst out with the tale of my sorrow, crying, "I am sure I shall die, and I am afraid! Even the world judges me hardly, and it is not so stern as God!"

See, my friends, I was judging the human as nobler than the Divine, and here was the result. I cried to God to bear with me to spare my life, but never a word respecting His loving me entered my prayers. Do you remember the country vicar's words which Chrissie quoted to me when her heart was meeting mine in its sorrow? They were these, "As near as the light is to the eye, so near is God to you." The evening of which I write Eva brought these words

again to my remembrance. I was sitting over a bright fire, thinking, with a rare, clinging, fondness, of the days when Chrissie and I talked together; also pondering much over her pleasant bearing of difficulties, and the noble way in which she had met them, when Eya came in to me.

Giving me a warm kiss, she said, "It is quite time for you to be in bed, dear; you know I am going to see you there at once. I will give you ten minutes to yourself, and then come in to tuck you away for the

night."

"You need not go away," I answered. "I would prefer you should stay, as I am really ready for sleep;" then, with an outburst inexplicable to me, I finished by saying, "If I could only get one good night's rest without this tiresome cough, I think I could be thankful."

"You poor dear," she said, caressingly; "I wish you could. Pray for it. Perhaps the rest may not be

so far off as you think."

I took alarm at once, yet I said nothing but the words, "It is little use my asking God for anything; He rarely seems to hear, or if He hears He does not answer."

"I believe He always answers if the thing we ask is

requisite for us, dear. Do you not think so?"

"I do not know," I answered, wearily. "He does not seem to care much about me. And I get very sick of asking for His care. Eva, I'll tell you exactly what I think. I believe God is tired of me! I have seen children in a family of whom even their mothers have grown weary, because they have been perpetual worries, and no comfort, and somehow I think God must feel like this to me. I am always wandering away from Him, and only come back when I want something."

"You mean you are like a child who strays away at play until the shadows lengthen, and he finds the berries do not satisfy his hunger. Then, when he is frightened of the dark, and wants real food, he goes to his mother for the true happiness."

I caught at the idea, but answered, "And if he could

not find her?"

"Ah!" she said, "you carry the simile too far, for the mother's voice might be far removed from the child, so that he could not hear, but God's voice is ever near to those who listen for it. Maggie, is it not ever wooing, calling through every circumstance to

win vou?"

When Eva had gone from my room, I began to think over her words, "Perhaps the rest is nearer than you think," and I transcribed it to suit my own views of a speedy death. Yet she had forgotten one thing. the rest was for the children of God, not for the wayfarers who wander. A "wayfarer," I said to myself; and a happy thought came to me, "A wayfarer, though a fool, need not err therein." Then I prayed to be guided, sought for help with strong cries, and tears, until the excitement unstrung me, and sleep fled my eyelids. Worn out for want of rest, languid with pain, I, the next morning, read a letter from Chrissie. It was most interesting to me in many ways, for I loved every person mentioned in it, yet I shrank from the last sentences of it, as if they contained an awful sting: "Alex makes no mention of you, and seems utterly indifferent when your name is mentioned. What have you done to him, Maggie? You used to be such chums at Werdon. Make a clean breast, my darling, and tell me if he has, again, proposed to you?"

That was all, but it was enough. Alex had for-

gotten me.

# CHAPTER XXXV.

#### A DISCOVERY.

THE three months grew into six before I returned to the Harwoods, for my recovery was very tardy, yet it proved, as the physician promised, a sure one. The Haverills had done everything that tried friends could do. I had enjoyed rest, change of air and scene; then the working time began again.

After this a lull ensued in the storm of my life. I was never able to work again with the old vigour and labour, yet I managed to accomplish my duties as they presented themselves. This state of things lasted for three years, broken by nothing more important than a few visits to Chrissie and the Haverills.

During the whole of this time I had heard little, or nothing, of Alex da Costa, neither had I once seen him, for although he had paid several visits to Philip, it had always happened to be at a time when I was not their guest. Mrs. Harwood and Miss Bowers did not make him a continual subject of conversation as formerly; moreover, after the first year had passed Miss Bowers' father—who held a Government appointment of much value—was removed to London, to fill up a vacancy occurring there. Of this fact I was very glad, for I had taken an almost unconquerable dislike to the girl, and hoped, most fervently, that no family connection would ever make it advisable that I should treat her as a friend or relative. Clemence Harwood was kind to me, invariably so; thus I was on a far happier footing in the house than when I left it because of my sickness. I had also contrived to save some money, in addition to making a pleasant little residence habitable for Aunt Isobel and myself. Life ran more smoothly, and during my evening hours, in

our snug little nest, I drove my pen as though my bread depended upon it. The little I earned procured her luxuries, such as she had been accustomed to in Philip's home; but I was content with humbler fare, because I believed it best to adapt myself to our present circumstances.

Eva Haverill kept up a regular correspondence with me, and did very much to bring my work under the favourable notice of magazine editors and publishers, so that I thrived accordingly. I made no fortune then or after—few authors do; but I found the extra pounds a valuable addition to our income.

My dreams of its path leading to an El Dorado of wealth presented themselves to me, now, as the visionary things that they really are. I learnt that from mercenary motives no one should write, neither from desire of fame; but with the pure, grand, one of doing the world good ever stirring at their hearts. My literary pursuits, with my music, were wonderful preventatives of *ennui* or repining; I grew mentally more fit for my task—yea, more fit for life. Things were in this peaceful state when a strange event again turned my work into new channels.

Business had been very slack for some days, so that there was little, or nothing, to do in the office. It had been intensely hot weather, and reminded me most forcibly of the time when Clemence Harwood proposed marriage to me, three years previously. I will be very exact about it, as I know other eyes than those of my friends will read this story. It was one brilliant morning, and a Thursday—one of the least busy of our days—when Mrs. Harwood came into the office to me, carrying a small paper parcel in her hand. It had become so customary a thing to her to come in for a chat, that I finished making my entry before turning to speak to her. It was the last I ever made in the day-book, but as I closed it and proceeded to place it in the safe where the books were always kept, I had no notion that my hand had traced its final work there.

She opened the parcel, and I saw a very prettily-bound volume intended for the mounting of heraldic designs in its pages. "I shall get you to help me fill this, also ask you to write the translation of the mottoes underneath the crests, for it needs a very clear handwriting to make it an acquisition to the original."

"I will assist you with pleasure," I answered, for I really liked the woman now. My feelings had undergone a thorough change, and since my return to business she had been uniformly kind to me. I proceeded—"I can give you a number of crests, if you like, for I have some of those belonging to our best families."

"You are kind! Will you fetch them now?"

"Certainly;" and I was just leaving the office for the purpose, when she called me back, saying, as she gave me a bunch of keys, "Will you also go into my bed-room, and bring me those in my desk? You will find them in one corner, enclosed in a glazed cover. I got a lot of envelopes from my husband, and took off the crests; of course they were business letters that I took them from—orders from our best customers."

So I took the key without any surprise at her so trusting me, for it was not the first time she had shown such implicit confidence in my integrity. Little did we either of us think that the last friendly act and word had been done and spoken by us, with regard to one another. So I went upstairs to my sitting-room, rifled my desk of all the letters in it, which contained armorial bearings of any description, then proceeding to Mrs. Harwood's bed-room, I stood once more near a disclosure which affected my whole life. Opening her desk, I searched for the package of which she had spoken, but failed to find it, not noticing that there were two desks in the room, and that the one I was searching was much larger than the other. I was about to close and re-lock it, when something caught my eye.

The whole world seemed turning round! Seized with a giddiness such as I can never describe, I took

hold of the small table upon which the desk stood, and brought both, with a crash, to the floor. Hardly knowing what impulse guided me, I took the latter into my lap, and held in my hand the proofs of the

vile treachery to which I had been subjected.

Then I covered my face with my hands, rocking myself, to and fro, in an impotence of pain as wild as it was fruitless. I could almost have written "Doomed" over the portals of all things pertaining to the loves of my life. Crushing the letter in my hand, as I pressed it against my face, I took in the value of the thing I had lost.

Have you guessed what I found? The very letter which Miss Bowers had read to me as the one she had received from Alex to herself, but the envelope was

directed to me.

I had just enough sense left to make no outcry, until I had prosecuted a more thorough search of Mrs. Harwood's desk. Fortunately for my future discoveries, the noise of the fall had not arrested any one's attention. I examined every crevice, and found seven letters directed to me which I had never seen before.

I read them with a deep anguish, and awful anger in my heart. They were all affectionate, even loving; but the last was full of reproaches over my having ceased to write, and concluded after this fashion:

- "I am hurt over your long silence; if it still continues I must believe that my letters have ceased to be welcome to you as they once were; and so concluding, I will not weary you with an account of things which must have proved uninteresting. Till then I am, as ever, affectionately, your "ALEX."
- "Nearly four years ago," I moaned to myself, as I put the letters into their separate envelopes, and tried to think what course I ought to pursue in reference to Mrs. Harwood. Upon one point I was determined—I would not remain under the same roof with her.

Meanwhile, wondering at the length of time I was absent from the office, she came in search of me, and as I rose to my feet I confronted her white face as she stood in the doorway. With one glance she had seen the state of affairs, then cowardly—as all dishonourable women are—turned upon me, demanding, "What business had you at that desk?" Her eye, at the same time, falling upon the other one I saw the mistake I had made.

God forgive me for the language I used to her, that night, as I denounced her treachery and meanness. My heart was breaking, for the intervening years had taught me how far removed were my feelings from mere liking, in connection with my cousin. I loved him!

I wrung from her the whole confession of her deceit. She, in conjunction with Miss Bowers, had intercepted my letters, and also stolen Alex's epistles to me. The package which I had seen on her dressing-table was part and parcel of the scheming by which they plotted my misery. Mrs. Harwood said that her happiness was so bound up in her son's, that she wrought this sin in order that I might, ultimately, accept his overtures, whilst the companion of her deed had aided her simply through pique and wounded vanity!

She was vexed that Alex had paid her so little attention, and therefore was quite ready to lend herself to anything likely to prove a source of annoyance

to both of us.

There was no help for it! I could not write to him now, for even rumours of him had been very scarce, and after this, how could I revive the old subject?

I was, perhaps, over-modest in my views concerning the reopening of the matter, but at last I plainly wrote to Chrissie, asking her if she had heard anything of him dwing the last formula the had been described.

him during the last few months.

When the answer came I had left the Harwoods, determining to live by the work of my pen. Mr. Harwood I parted from with sincere regret; and in the case of his son, I most heartily wished that our inter-

course had not been marred by his love for me; he had many qualities for which I entertain a sincere admiration. From my heart I believe he was utterly incapable of deceit of any kind, therefore I acquitted him at once of any share in his mother's duplicity.

Then commenced my struggle for a bare existence, of which I have previously written. I worked for mere bread. Aunt Isobel returned to Philip, upon my representing to her how needful it would be to work and study, if I took up literature as a profession instead of a mere help to eke out the means afforded by another branch of labour. I promised her that in a few years, I would make a name and position for both of us, but at the same time showed her that it must be a work of years, not months.

My sanguine views with regard to it were vastly altered, and I was aware that it would be no child's play, but a great task, requiring energy of purpose and freedom of thought. I did not wish her to see the struggle, although I was content she should share the victory. The battle was no mimic one, but I was girding myself to the fight. Your heart would ache if I told you all the vicissitudes of the fortune which came to me, both good and bad. Sometimes the guerdon of my toil would seem within my reach, until it appeared as if I had little else to do but stretch out my hand and take it; then again it would vanish, and the hand-to-hand fight with poverty recommence. do not exaggerate when I tell you that I often wanted mere bread; that I have worked with a hand unsteady from sheer want, and written the manuscript with ink, for the purchase of which I have broken into my last shilling, not knowing how soon the next would come; and this, after being reared in plenty and comparative indolence.

With all this I had one thing upon which I could fall back—if I really failed, in the end, I could return to my old employment, or go to Philip and Chrissie. All thoughts of Alex I endeavoured to repress, for

Chrissie's reply to my letter told me that a mutual friend had made her recently acquainted with the fact that he was paying particular attention to a certain Rose Scorey, who was resident near the Hollow, and who was vividly present to my mind as a pretty, engaging, girl, of gentle manners and affectionate disposition. It was now too late to remedy the old mistake, I argued, for if I wrote him the account of Mrs. Harwood's treachery it would be tantamount to sueing for his old friendship and favour. Yet with all this I was growing fonder of life; deep down in my heart a little seed had been sown—the thought that some day I might do work worthy of offering to God. Again, and yet again, I had to fight with my old unbelief; but, somehow, I saw the tender, loving hand of God in my lot as I had never seen it before.

When people smile, now, and tell me how I sympathise with the sorrows of others. I think how much trouble I gave my Father, ere I learnt the lesson; yet I do not fear His wrath over my waywardness—I only

feel His dear, dear, love in it all.

And if they say more than this, if they speak of my old life, I never repudiate the poverty of it; never deny its struggles, its temptations, or its anguish, for I have learnt that the things we deem its miseries, often prove its greatest riches; and I am not ashamed of the way I had to walk; only grieved that I did not learn it quicker.

The darkest hour of my life was passing, and through it all I was hearing the voice of God, even as Eva Haverill had told me I should do if I listened for it.

Then when I was ready for the blessing of happiness, God gave it to me.

1

## CHAPTER XXXVI.

# GERRARD POWER'S OLD LOVE.

As I worked I saw article after article of furniture go from my rooms; I was literally obliged to sell them in order that I might honestly provide the necessaries of life—i.e., enough food and raiment to keep body and soul together. Then I removed into dingier lodgings, making both sitting and bed room of a smaller apartment than the one that had caused me so much misery in H—. More than this, I was working alone; no longer having the companionship of Moey, Chrissie, and Aunt Isobel to cheer me. I was working out for myself life's great problem. Sitting night after night, by a solitary hearth, longing with a great, dumb, unspeakable, yearning for something I could never again possess.

Then commenced a labour of love, such as I have never regretted; I lived in one of the poorest tenements in S——, simply because I could afford to pay no higher rent than that demanded by its landlady, and ere long I was making the acquaintance of other people in a like position. I knew what it was to sit down in many a room which would never have known the tread of feet such as mine, if it had not been for the discipline of sorrow through which God had called me. Many a hand in heaven has known the touch of mine that would have gone to God unhallowed by the clasp of human sympathy if He had not first taught me how to find my way to them.

One evening I was wearily going up the stairs of the house into my own room, when I fancied I heard a moan of extreme pain; pausing for a moment, I listened attentively, soon discovering the place from whence the sounds came. I have never liked to in-

trude upon any one's grief, and this night I felt as if it were impossible for me to go to the sufferer. I went on, to my own room, and sat down to finish an article into which I was putting my best thoughts of God. For the first time in my life I was writing a, really, religious story; one of deeds, not words. The clouds were lifting from my mental vision, and I was seeing God's Divine wisdom. As I wrote the moan again fell upon my ear, while I mentally prayed "God help her whoever she is; for the world is very pitiless."

Faster and faster my pen flew over the paper, until my fingers were cramped with the swift motion, and my body stiff with its continued sitting posture. At length I rose to put out my candle, in order that I might pursue my course of thought in the dark, for candles cost money, and money meant more work. Again the moan came to my ears; this time fainter

than before.

As it rose up to me an old verse ran in my head, "So I returned and considered all the oppressions that are done under the sun; and behold the tears of such as were oppressed, and they had no comforter; and on the side of their oppressors there was power; but they had no comforter."

"But they had no comforter." How the words rang themselves up and down in my heart, until I could bear them no longer. Kneeling down, I asked for power to comfort the sorrowing heart, then went slowly down the stairs to the door of the room from which the sounds proceeded. "Woe to him that is alone when he falleth," wrote the Preacher; and full well did I feel the forcefulness of his statement as, my low knock receiving no answer, I opened the door of my fellow-lodger's apartment.

She was in a half stupor, either of physical or mental pain, and took no notice of my entrance, while a lovely child lay sleeping upon the bare floor. I fancied the two mother and child, but as the former took no notice of my entrance, I lifted the latter in my arms, and

tenderly carried her up to my own room. Then I went to my cupboard to take out the little tea I had in it, and, with my last coals, proceeded to replenish the fire in order that I might make some sort of restorative for the woman lying below. So familiar had I become with sorrow that I went about all this in the methodical manner so much quicker in its work than

any flurried or hasty movements.

Having set my kettle on the kindled fire, I went to my new-found patient and lifted her face into my lap. I am not exaggerating in the least when I say that it quite startled me with its wonderful beauty; the features were so well cut, the eyelashes so beautiful, the hair so magnificent, that I could never forget them! But it was the face of a dead, rather than of a living, woman, and for many an hour its expression did not change. I called for the landlady's help, but when she came, and saw to whom I was offering relief, she stood with her arms akimbo, loudly exclaiming against the indignity put upon her by that "thing" dying in her house. "She didn't want any pauper's funerals going from her door," with many other expressions of the same sort.

Superhuman power came to me; my whole form dilating into unusual strength, I took her by the shoulders, and put her, bodily, from the room, with a strange tingling in my frame, warning me that I needed a strong control over myself if I wished to keep from an exhibition of muscular Christianity. "Them that don't pay goes," was her last threat as she descended the rickety staircase, her heavy form bumping down it with a quickness to which my exertions had given impetus.

Once more alone with the woman, I gave my whole soul up to the task of aiding her restoration. At last a low gasping sound proved to me that she was coming to her senses again. She sat up with a bewildered face, then the bewilderment grew into a wild look of agony as she looked around the room; seeing no one

but me, with relief upon her countenance, she breathed a fervent "Thank God," and fell to sobbing as I have never seen a woman sob before or since. She continued to cry until I was afraid; then as her strength failed her she lay still and quiet, as if the weight were too heavy for the relief of words. I asked no question, for I have ever found it best to wait for,

instead of seeking, confidence.

There is no need to harrow your feelings with all the details of her story; when once she opened her heart to me, I was astonished at the amount of suffering and privation she had undergone. My toils sank into insignificance as I listened to the recital of hers. This girl worked with her hands as few ever do. had made a mistake with regard to the child so calmly sleeping in my bed-room. She was not her own child, but a little sister, who was wholly dependent upon her care.

"You are young to live alone like this," I said, as

she finished.

"Youth is not exempt from poverty," she answered bitterly. "And God knows the poor have few friends."

"You are right; but surely you have some?" I queried, as the poor wan face smote me like a pain.

"I have not. There is not one in this wide world to whom I can go, and to-morrow I shall be homeless. have tried everything and seen each effort fail. Who asks life?" she questioned fiercely. "Yet I have to bear its burden."

Poor heart, I hear your tormented, vexed, soul giving utterance to words such as Christian lips would condemn! I hear it to-night, as I heard it years ago, and I answer them—the throwers of stones—and say, Go and feel poverty as she felt it, put your last crust of bread inside your lips, realise that you are spending your last evening under the shelter of a roof, then gather your saintly garments closer round you ere you aim another missile, lest the eyes of some loftier Being scan your hypocrisy, beneath its folds.

This girl, who, like myself, had found life too hard, was one who was to bring me back to a knowledge of Alex's depth of love, and in addition to all this she was Gerrard Power's lost love, the dainty, well-born, beauty whose affection he once dared not crave.

# CHAPTER XXXVII.

#### MY LETTER AND ITS FRUIT.

GERRARD POWER! As she told me the name of her old lover I called up the brave, grand, face of the man who had spoken of dragging her winsome, bonnie, beauty through the shifts of poverty, and thought of the way in which God decrees us to walk blindfolded. If he had but known how darkly God's sun was shining upon her, because of the intervening clouds, how gladly would he have taken her into the shelter of his care and protection. She was a woman to her heart's core, thus the battle of life went harder with her than most; she could not trust herself to its dishonesties, but she dared its privations and miseries.

We need a heaven—we mortals—to compensate for the anguish of deep waters through which we have to pass; a heaven of comfort. I think I can never be glad enough that God promises satisfaction when we get to the abode of His children, for it is the one thing for which our souls are crying out; yet with all this I believe we are, hundreds of us, weary and languid in our earth travelling because we go away, wilfully or not, from earth's greatest good in the shape of love for each other.

If I could but show to you girls the havoc you make, for the after years, when you play with life's sweetest,

gravest, lesson, you would shrink from doing aught but

touching it with tender hands and pure hearts.

Love, the very essence of happiness, is naught with which you may coquette; it is the one lesson of which the Godhead is the spring, and therefore, of all others, the one to be prayerfully looked into.

When listening to Gerrard Power's story, I had thought it a pity that the girl of his love should never have known anything concerning the affection he bore her. Now listening, with a woman's experience to guide me, to her story, I knew that the precociousness of the former days was endorsed by the real wisdom of the latter.

It was a story much after the fashion of my own, only more terrible in its details, because she had a child to care for in addition to the hardness of procuring her own livelihood. Through all her changes of fortune she had kept one thing that reminded her of her old identity, when she was the petted child of fortune as well as of love: that was Gerrard's photograph. Several days after our acquaintanceship began she showed it to me. We were sitting over my own little fire—for we were sharing the same room, and hers was already let off to another of the hapless sisterhood who toil for the necessaries of life. It was lifelike, yet it was not the Gerrard I had known, although I recognised its features at once. So young a face, so gay and joyful, that the lines of life seemed hard and wearisome as I recollected how they had been written upon his countenance when I knew it in H---; yet I liked the latter best. The lovely face of my listener grew still more beautiful as I told her of his useful life in the town I had so hated, with its scandal-loving inhabitants. I found out a great deal about his former days, and told her much concerning the ones spent in H---; of his ceaseless labours for the poor, and his great trust in God, as evidenced in the lessons he taught. I grew stronger to bear life as I pondered over the fashion in which he had lived, even when

God had taken from him the thing he most craved. "Only his poverty came between us," she said, as we sat together in the gloaming. "I know he loved me, but he dared not speak of it because there was no prospect of supporting me in the fashion to which I had been used."

"Did he give you his photograph?" I queried, as

she took it from my hands.

"No; I stole it from his sister's album—or at least I took, if I did not absolutely steal, it. Poor Bessie, she was very fond of me; she was married when I was a girl at home, and I remember how sadly I heard of her intended departure from our neighbourhood; then came news of her death, so my last link to Gerrard's family was destroyed. If he only had known of my father's failure, and after poverty, I know he would have come back to me long ere this. It was only his lack of wealth that separated us."

"You were his only love," I answered. "He has spoken to me of you, and I believe if he knew he

would come to you at once."

She sat with clasped hands looking so like Moey that I was startled with the resemblance; but when she spoke her whole face changed. With a ringing depth in her voice, and a resolute look about her mouth such as I did not like to see, she averred: "He had his pride, I have mine. See, I would starve before I would go to him in poverty when he would not marry me in my fancied wealth. I would not have him think I could be won because I had no home."

"He would not dream so dishonourable a thing of you," I said. "But a man likes to marry upon an equality; or else a woman lower in position than himself. A truly noble man prefers to confer rather than to receive."

"So does a woman."

"Not always," I answered. "A woman who loves can repay any, and every, indebtedness to her hus-

band. She has in her own hands far more than he—the making of the home happiness, and this is not made by money. If a woman wishes so to do she can bring her husband a dowry such as no position, or monetary worth, can purchase. She can train his children to be more than the light, the pride, of his home; and it is always better that other obligations should be upon the husband's side, as he is ever likely to prove more generous in his reminiscences of these than is a woman. Men are too noble to taunt; alas, women are not!"

"I do not say it is not so," she said. "Yet, I should object to marry a man in a position such as Gerrard's; when he, in fact, refused to marry me under other circumstances."

In spite of this conversation I made up my mind to take a step towards bringing them together again. I held different views from those of my new companion, and still hold them. It is an impossibility for any obligations to exist 'twixt man and wife, where both are equally educated, and of good family; a perfect confidence in each other must ever banish all existing ones—i.e., those existing before marriage.

Besides this, I knew that if it were not so, a wife can always ensure that it shall be forgotten even when a husband would not possess a like power. It is in her hands to make home the pleasantest place in all the world. Although I am writing of my own sex, I do believe that a good wife is the best thing God can bestow upon any man. By a "good wife" I do not mean merely a religious one, but a regular helpmeet a woman who will uncomplainingly, and faithfully, lift her end of the burden of life, educate his children, see to the appointments of his home, without worrying him by petty details of her management and her expenditure. My personal observation during the past few days had made me acquainted with the fact that Maude Child's failure in gaining her living was through no fault of her own. She was so self-reliant up to a

certain point, and that point was one upon which many a strong man would have stumbled—namely, starvation.

After she was fairly asleep I sat down to pen a letter to Gerrard Power. My own experiences were such that, mayhap, a saddened tone crept into the words I wrote:—

"MY DEAR MR. Power,—I am writing to you because several events have lately transpired in which I am sure you will take a keen interest. As I do so I am recalling an evening upon which you spoke to me concerning your love for a girl who was far removed from you, because of your comparative poverty and her wealth; you told me of a dream in which you indulged, of a girl-wife waiting for you after the toil of the day, and remembering your earnestness upon this subject, I am raking up these old memories, because I have a purpose in resurrectionising them. A few days ago I met the girl of whom you had such visions; she is all that you described her to be—and more—excepting in one particular. She is no longer wealthy, but poor. Not such poverty as we knew in H—, but a thousand times worse. I cannot tell you all the reasons I have for now writing to you, but this is one of them; I want you to come to her and win her. I am assured of one thing, she loves you, and life is too short to waste in a game of cross purposes. If you write to her she may give you a different answer from the one expected; if you plead your suit in person, I believe you will not do it in vain.

With the reply to this letter came also the answering note of my song of gladness and joy.

### CHAPTER XXXVIII.

### ALEX AND I.

You can guess how it came, can you not? Gerrard brought it in person. A few days after my letter was written I came home from a long walk, and I found him with Maude Child. They were sitting together, she with a look of quiet happiness upon her face, his wearing a serenely beautiful expression, such as I had never seen it wear before. There was little need to ask any question as to the light in which Maude regarded Gerrard now. Henceforth they would walk life's road together.

"Even poor people must have a holiday sometimes," I said, as soon as I had expressed to them the gladness I felt at their reunion. "I believe we will have a little feast to commemorate our happiness." Reckless of after-wants, I determined to spend one more really

comfortable evening.

An hour or two later a cheerful fire was burning in our little grate, and a sumptuous—for us—tea was laid out, whilst Gerrard Power sat making toast as if it were his one occupation or accomplishment.

Over the tea-table, we fell into converse concerning our old habits at H——, and then found ourselves

talking of Alex da Costa.

"No one can tell how earnest and good he is unless they fully know him," was Gerrard's remark. "He tries to hide his goodness, instead of making a show of it. I wish he would settle; but I fear he has no idea of such a thing. People used to fancy he would marry Rose Scorey; but after a time it turned out only friendship existed between them, and that he had been retained as special pleader for an old sweetheart of hers." "Was he never engaged to her himself?" I queried, half in doubt. "I heard that he was showing her a

great deal of attention."

"Yes; that was the subject of general gossip, until John Pollard, her old lover, appeared upon the scene. He came to H—— and spent two or three days with me; I also spent several weeks with him, but he showed no sign of being in love. However, ladies are the best judges of such things, and you will both have an opportunity of finding out for yourselves, for he is to join me here, in S——, to-morrow, and I do not mean to leave the town without my wife. You will aid me in my pleadings, will you not, Miss da Costa? for as you say, 'Life is too short for cross-purposes,' and we dare not separate again lest we should shorten our own happiness."

So there was to be a wedding, and Alex was to take part in it; a quiet affair enough—no bridesmaids, no cake, no wedding march; but for all this, two souls were to be made of one mind and heart as certainly as if all the pomp and pageantry of show had furnished forth its grandest appurtenances. How should we two meet after all these years? Would the ghost of bygone remembrances stand between us? Could it be possible for us to come once more face to face, in the common walks of life, and no explanation ensue?

These were the questions I asked myself when sleep had fallen over the other members of our little household, and I lay, wide awake, at Maude's side. A smile was upon her lips that animated their colourlessness, as I had not fancied it could do; her whole face was lit up by it, and I told myself, over and over again, to rejoice in her happiness, and forget the loneliness of my own heart.

Then I thought of my friends in heaven, and, so thinking, I half wondered how long God would require that I should travel the road of this lower life. Papa was there, Moey had joined him, mamma was with both, and I was alone.

A whisper of peace dawned into my heart: "I will not leave you comfortless; I will come unto you;" together with it I heard the echo of a voice long silent, saying, "I should like to see my Daisy clothed with the robe of righteousness, and wearing the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit." It lingered with me, for these were the last words my father had ever spoken to me. Slipping out of bed, I knelt down and prayed earnestly, that both this dress and spirit might be mine. Earth receded; heaven came near. "With these I give all things," was the uppermost idea in my mind as the peace vanquished the sorrow. With strong faith I took hold upon God, for once, understanding the significance of the text, "Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him."

Friends were gone—home to Him; fame was a vision; life a scene of earnest battle, with no stronghold for weary mortals, excepting the unchanging love of God and His Christ. At last my feet had turned into the shelter of the fold, and I, too, could say with unfaltering tongue, "To us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things and we in Him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by Him."

I was content; God had apportioned me my lot; therefore, why should I be afraid? So I crept back again beside Maude, and fell asleep with a heart from which all divisions and strife had fled for ever. We do not know what is best for ourselves, so God's unerring judgment steps in and decides for us; thus it was in my case. No sooner did I thoroughly submit to Him, than my peace began. An eventful life had been given to me, one far removed from that I should have chosen for myself, but it eventually led me to the peace I needed.

When I rose the next morning I went to my work in a different spirit; it was no longer feeling after God, but feeling that He was working in me. I was then writing the chapters of the religious story succeeding the one of which I have previously written. It was for the pages of a second or third rate magazine; but I no longer thought anything of my class of readers, but of the eyes that would look upon its pages and grow either weak or strong through the reading of them. I prayed that unto every line God would breathe of His own pure spirit, so that when judgment or reward was given, no eye might meet mine with reproach. The earnestness of my work was at last dawning upon me, until with my whole energy I pleaded the intensely earnest prayer, "Deliver me

from blood-guiltiness, O Lord."

Then I made a resolution, one which I have kept, never to pen a single chapter upon which I could not ask the blessing of Our Father; after which I sat down to my usual morning's labour. Gerrard and Maude went out for a walk, as the former made his appearance at our lodgings directly after breakfast, and insisted upon our both taking holiday. I refused, for time was money, so I had none to spare; but Maude went, thus I was left alone. It was a clear, frosty, morning, and as the sun peeped in at the window. I was obliged to turn my back upon it lest I should be tempted to forego an hour's labour in order that I might enjoy the rare frosty air. How I worked that morning! It was as if the spring of youth had come back to me, for truly they who wait upon the Lord do renew their strength. The eagle's wings are given to them, and they mount until they are almost within the veil. The hours wore away and I had just written these words, "The renouncing of self is impossible without entire submission to God; but once this step is taken all must be well." I laid down my pen and went to the little cupboard, to take out my simple noonday meal, when a voice at the door made me start into that rare consciousness of self, which few have power to call into life.

Another moment and my hand was in that of Alex's, while the dropping of a few common-place words of

greeting hid our mutual agitation. We talked of everything and everybody but ourselves, even whilst I was determining to tell him the whole story of Mrs. Harwood's and Miss Bowers' treachery.

At last he took up the pages of manuscript lying upon the table, saying, "Am I privileged to look?"

"Certainly."

Having read a few passages he said, "I have written several articles, but I suppose they were not very interesting to you. Political subjects are rarely engrossing to women."

"You are mistaken," I answered quietly; "I was greatly interested in the one you sent me, and felt

proud to call you friend."

"You are good to say so. I should have sent you more, but I fancied they were uninteresting as were my letters."

"Neither were so," I began, but found myself scarcely able to proceed, for I was determined he should know the truth, yet I could find no words in which to frame my story.

He helped me by asking, "Then why were you so

silent yourself?"

Upon which I told him the whole—every word excepting one fact; that to me the suppression of these letters had been the robbing of life's greatest joy. After all that I have previously told to you, need I write of the things that followed? Our betrothal took place in the room in whose precincts I had laboured for my daily bread, and it was there I learnt how nobly Alex loved me.

Now after the lapse of years, I can say, "That day God sent me the rarest crowning of a life." When Gerrard and Maude came back we had our story to tell, but we said nothing of the happy tears I had shed, or the protestations of love made by Alex, for these were reserved as secrets for our own hearts.

"I can afford to forgive them, now," Alex said in connection with the women who had so wronged us

both; "but if our separation had been a final one, she would have had much to answer for; as it is——"

I finished the sentence for him. Laying my hands upon the written pages, the fruit of my morning's work, I said, "As it is, here is the work my heart-sufferings prompted; here are the expressions of comfort for others, such as God sent to me. We cannot be very sorry now. I shall make you a better wife, darling, because of the heart-trials I have known; a better friend by reason of my sorrow, and a truer sympathiser with humanity in its anguish and its poverty."

We went at once—that is, both Maude and I—to Philip and Chrissie, and we were both married from

their pretty home.

My life is no idle one now, for Alex and I have numberless duties, which are either self-imposed or God-imposed. We have our work in the church and in the world; and if you ever come to The Hollow we will show you a village such as you would find it hard to match.

Miss Hamilton often visits us, and I know now the whole story of her life. It is one worthy of many a chapter, so at some future day I will write it for you. I would tell you that her visits to The Hollow are not paid alone; only perhaps you might guess too much. The child Maggie is growing into a sweet, graceful, girl, but I do not think her life-story will bear any resemblance to her Aunt Maggie's, although I know her path must have briers, even as does that of all who really learn to live; but she will ever carry with her the light of her childish days.

My class of Sunday-school girls know me only as the Lady of the Hollow, and the writer of a few religious stories, so when they first asked for the tale of my own life, they little thought how much they would learn of my early struggles. My old home has passed into other hands, it is true; but they are those of my dear, dear, husband. He is my true and faithful friend,

my counsellor and guide.

One day we were travelling in Ireland, going over the old scenes through which Alex had once been alone, when we met Clemence Harwood in company with his wife, and to my excessive surprise the latter was my old enemy. She must have known of the *exposé* of her deceit, yet she made no sign, but greeted us with a cool effrontery almost unpardonable.

Alex bowed, and drawing my arm within his own, walked quickly away, leaving me no time to decide

whether I would return her greeting or not.

As we entered the hotel he said to me, "I could hardly bring myself to recognise that woman; she made you go through such rough buffetings and trials. When I think of the poverty you endured, I feel as if I could never pardon her. Poor darling! you had to bear the fierceness of an awful storm."

I looked into his face, and to me it was the truest in all the world; so I answered reverently and tenderly as I acknowledged God's love in the gift, "I have sailed into Smooth Waters. After the anguish I have the rest; after the travail of spirit a quiet content. Alex, my love, if I could tell you how thankful I am!"

For reply he smiled into my face, and made answer in the words of the old book—"He maketh the storm a calm, so that the waves thereof are still. Then are they glad because they be quiet; so He bringeth them unto their desired haven."

THE END.

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